

29. The Night View of the World

“UPON the night view of the world, a day view must follow.” This is an ancient insight grounded in the experience of the race in its long journey through all the years of man’s becoming. Here is no cold idea born out of the vigil of some solitary thinker in lonely retreat from the traffic of the common ways. It is not the wisdom of the book put down in ordered words by the learned and the schooled. It is insight woven into the pattern of all living things, reaching its grand apotheosis in the reflection of man gazing deep into the heart of his own experience.

That the day view follows the night view is written large in nature. Indeed it is one with nature itself. The clouds gather heavy with unshed tears; at last they burst, sending over the total landscape waters

gathered from the silent offering of sea and river. The next day dawns and the whole heavens are aflame with the glorious brilliance of the sun. This is the way the rhythm moves. The fall of the year comes, then winter with its trees stripped of leaf and bud; cold winds ruthless in bitterness and sting. One day there is sleet and ice; in the silence of the nighttime the snow falls soundlessly—all this until at last the cold seems endless and all there is seems to be shadowy and foreboding. The earth is weary and heavy. Then something stirs—a strange new vitality pulses through everything. One can feel the pressure of some vast energy pushing, always pushing through dead branches, slumbering roots—life surges everywhere within and without. Spring has come. The day usurps the night view.

Is there any wonder that deeper than idea and concept is the insistent conviction that the night can never stay, that winter is ever moving toward the spring? Thus, when a man sees the lights go out one by one, when he sees the end of his days marked by death—his death—he *senses*, rather than knows, that even the night into which he is entering will be followed by day. It remains for religion to give this ancient wisdom phrase and symbol. For millions of men and women in many climes this phrase and this symbol are forever one with Jesus, the Prophet from Galilee. When the preacher says as a part of the last rites, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, . . ." he is reminding us all of the ancient wisdom: "Upon the night view of the world, a day view must follow."

26. Reaping and Sowing

The long arm of the relentless logic of reaping and sowing gathers within the sweep of its judgment the innocent and the guilty, the responsible and the irresponsible, the weak and the strong, the old and the young. The heavy shadow of the threat of war is upon us, and as we search our own hearts we find we are at war within ourselves. We recognize the failure of the things upon which we have pinned our hopes. We recognize the hopes that have not deserted us, even in these strange times loaded with stranger events, and we long for some authentic word that will speak peace to our hearts and peace to the nations of the earth. Even as we long for this, our guilt looms ever before us. We are wanderers with shattered spirits, offering in the quietness our fragments.

Our Father, we do not know how to pray to Thee. We do not know what we have the right to say to Thee. We do not even know how we feel. All that we know is that our peace is choked by the threat that lingers menacingly over all our waking hours, making our sleep fretful and unrewarding. Give unto us guidance. Give unto those in whose hands rests the immediate decision—guidance. Tame the stupidity and the greed and the avarice and the fear out of the souls of the peoples of this earth, that Thy purposes for Thy children may not be thwarted and frustrated because of the blindness in our thoughts and the fear in our hearts. Our Father, Creator of life, Sustainer of the generations of men, leave us not alone, leave us not alone.