

4. THE PILGRIM PRAYER

The beginning of the second stage of Newman's pilgrim journey coincided with his voyage to the south of Europe. This voyage was a voyage of exploration into his own pilgrim heart. At this time it was not yet clear to the poet what lay ahead of him and of the specific task that God was summoning him to accomplish. Yet an echo of some kind of presentiment of what was in store at the end of the voyage is reflected in the sonnet "Angelic Guidance."¹ In this happy sonnet the pilgrim expresses his belief in the companionship and guidance of the angels on his pilgrim path. He experiences that the angel, his 'unearthly Friend' (1) is at his side every moment of his pilgrimage and even: "stoops to attend / My doubtful-pleading grief;--or blunts the might / Of ill I see not;--" (5-7). Further his experience on the journey is that: "to the thoughtful mind / That walks with Him, He half unveils His face" (10-11).

The poem blends harmoniously Newman's innermost beliefs and intuitive consciousness of providential care where all unknown to us, we are led by the hand of God and His ministering angels. Thus the pilgrim feels secure that his terrestrial pilgrimage is sheltered under the beneficent care of God. Newman with his uncommon advantage of combining a religious and an artistic sensibility did not blindly grope like Shelley even though he was still behind a veil. He used beautiful images of the vision, the dream, the half-veiled face, the shadow, the 'foot-prints' and the 'vesture-skirts of light,' all of which were significant elements for the guidance of the pilgrim.

Newman's experience of the hidden presence of God in

A pilgrim pale, with Paul's sad girdle bound. (7-12)
 The poet looked forward to life at Oriel college, his home and the enjoyment of an unruffled and quiet life. But what life unrolled for the poet was not 'Isaac's pure blessings' (9): peace, honour, prosperity, and domestic bliss.⁵ The poet was lured step by step to follow the Lord ever more closely. The poem ends on a prophetic strain as the pilgrim looks to the future and finds himself: "A pilgrim pale, with Paul's sad girdle bound" (12). Yet what this devotee would hold on to, on his pilgrim way is faith which 'serves and adores,'⁶ and he exhorts his pilgrim companions and himself in the poem "The Gift of Perseverance:"⁷

Shroud not the soul from God, nor soothe its needs;
 Deny thee thine own fears, and wait the end !
 Stern lesson! Let me con it day by day,
 And learn to kneel before the Omniscient Ray,
 Nor shrink, when Truth's avenging shafts descend !

(10-14)

The poet has set his face from the start: "Towards thy [his] Redeemer Lord"⁸ like the Biblical prophets and his aim on the way is: "To tend and deck His holy place, / And note His secret word."⁹ Thus he hopes to reach 'Heaven's glorious path.'¹⁰ The poet follows those apostles "who use the world, yet not abuse" it and "have their heads below, their hearts above" such as St. Paul whose "letters wear the garb of heaven."¹¹ The pilgrim poet knows what lies in store for him on his journey. He conveys this in the poem "The Saint and the Hero:"¹²

The Saint's is not the Hero's praise;--
 This I have found, and learn
 Nor to malign Heaven's humblest ways,
 Nor its least boon to spurn. (9-12)

Hence from his pilgrim tent he beckons his companions in the poem "Isaac:"¹³ "So we move heavenward with averted

face, / Scared into faith by warning of sin's pains; / And Saints are lower'd, that the world may rise" (12-14). In the poem entitled "Israel"¹⁴ the poet asks the pilgrims: "For who dare sit at home, and wait to see / High Heaven descend, when man from self is called / Up through this thwarting outward world to Heaven?" (12-14). Instead the pilgrim poet and his companions wait only for a catharsis or a purgation as is expressed in the poem "Hope:"¹⁵

. . .and now we wait

The second substance of the deluge type,
When our slight ark shall cross a molten surge;
So, while the gross earth melts, for judgement
ripe,

Ne'er with its haughty turrets to emerge,

We shall mount up to Eden's long-lost gate. (9-14)

So this is what they aim at, on their pilgrim journey to "mount up to Eden's long-lost gate."¹⁶ This undoubtedly would involve many a sacrifice on their part but the pilgrim poet has decided to make it to his goal.

Yet with all his firm decision to work on the Lord's behest and to lead his pilgrim companions to the heavenly city, the poet experiences intermittently his own unworthiness and helplessness and cries out in despair: "I ne'er shall reach Heaven's glorious path."¹⁷ It is then no wonder that his journey to Sicily turned out to be a time of preparation for taking up a holy leadership. The richly verdured heights of Sicily exercised a mysterious power over the poet's soul and provided for him an atmosphere to meditate on the state of his soul and that of the pilgrim humanity around him. That sense of catharsis experienced here by the poet emboldens him for the future task.

The poem "The Pillar of the Cloud,"¹⁸ generally known by the first phrase with which it begins: "Lead Kindly Light,"

is born from a situation of crisis and change. The poet does not see the path he must take as a true Christian pilgrim. Thus weighed down by uncertainties, he cries out in an intense, agonizing state in darkness, asking for supernatural guidance.

The poem portrays the most sincere soul-searching, ever done by a poet, and his present vagueness of plans. Due to the lack of direction, the action is handed over to the 'Kindly Light,' as the poet finds himself 'amid the encircling gloom' (1). As the 'gloom' takes over 'encircling' him, the poet does not find a way out: "The night is dark, and I am far from home" (3). The poet experiences 'the dark night of the soul' when he is 'far from home,' which adds intensity to his pain and to his experience of the spiritual wilderness in a foreign land. He is a pilgrim in a strange circumstance both physically and spiritually.

The reference to sight sharpens the experience of darkness: "I do not ask to see / The distant scene—one step enough for me" (5-6). He prays for just enough light to be led on step by step in the 'encircling gloom.' The bare minimum to go on is all that he longs for and does not desire for more, to see 'the distant scene'. The imagery used to set the prayer in a desperate and forlorn atmosphere is most appropriate. The image of 'encircling gloom' portrays the picture of the poet as enclosed by gloomy darkness which swallows him up. Here is where the poet prays for light. Light in darkness is the most powerful image for any one meditating alone in time of trouble.

The imagery of the dark night refers to the sleepless, feverish nights when the poet had prayed for the light of day, and also to the night of past pride and to the confusion of faithlessness. Newman is also painfully reminded of the former delusive lights of the concepts advanced by the Noetical school at Oriel, and his preference for intellectual excellence over moral values during those years. He now

realizes that he had strayed from the pilgrim path for a time. The poet bares his soul in humble confessions and helplessness: "I loved to choose and see my path" (9), "I loved the garish day" (11), "Pride ruled my will" (12). These are his sins. The poet knew what self-will could lead one into, as he writes in the poem "Moses."¹⁹ He takes the example from the Old Testament prophet as this poem shows:

Moses, the man of meekest heart,
Lost Canaan by self-will,
To show, where Grace has done its part,
How sin defiles us still. (5-8)

This realization leads him on in prayer:

Thou, who hast taught me in Thy fear,
Yet seest me frail at best,
O grant me loss with Moses here,
To gain his future rest! (9-12)

The poet's attitude of humble confession and constant prayer are in keeping with the practice of the Church. The poet acknowledges, 'O Holiest Truth' "But my foot slipp'd; and, as I lay, he came, / My gloomy foe, and robbed me of heaven's flame. / Help Thou my darkness, Lord, till I am light".²⁰ The pilgrim is made aware of his need of God's help in his weakness and approaches the throne of Heaven in humble submission.

The certainty of the possessive 'my path' (9) gives way to the dependence of 'Lead Thou me on' (10) and his prayer now is 'remember not past years' (12). Now he would no more follow any 'garish' light, that is any delusive light, as in the previous days, which distracted his single-hearted attention and devotion to the Lord on his journey towards Him.

A full and mature realization comes to the poet of his own state of mind. Against this realization is set the men of his country, also pilgrims but who have not yet attained an awareness of their disintegrating plight due to the

increasing liberalism which might sweep away the very fabric of society at any moment. The poet feels powerless against this vast spreading trend of the time, and hence feels the weight of inward powerlessness and darkness.

In the third stanza, the focus shifts to the guiding light and he hopes that the 'Kindly Light,' would lead him on. The blessings of the 'Kindly Light,' in the past are recalled: "So long Thy power hath blest me" (13). With the first line of the third stanza there is a lightening, which is expressed partly by the use of the word 'still,' at the end of the line: "sure it still / Will lead me on" (13-14). It is an affirmation of hope, echoing the sound as well as the sense of the word 'still.' Here the lines convey hope, a sort of confidence that the 'Kindly Light' 'Will lead' him again. The refrain of the first stanza 'Lead Thou me on!' is changed in the third stanza to: 'Will lead me on.' The poet's torment is calmed down by a sense of sustaining communion experienced in the past years. A confession of his guilt followed by a confidence in the Providence, fills him with hope.

The geography of the wild places, such as the rocky heights, sandy water courses, the barren tracts of land in parts of Sicily might have inspired the imagery of the following line. The poet blends the Sicilian scenes with English landscapes: "O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent" (15). The 'moor' and 'fen' are obviously English landscapes while the 'crag' and 'torrent' are clearly Sicilian. The poet is an English pilgrim who finds himself now in a Sicilian natural scenery, and his illness here prepares him for a spiritual leadership worthy of Heaven's knight. Henceforth, he would follow the 'Kindly Light' no matter where it leads him to and no obstacles would hold him back. That beam of light which emanates from the Lord, would in fact be a search light for him and would keep his attention on the right path and on

the holy means to bring him to his true destination. The poem makes it clear that the poet has to go a very difficult route: "O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent" (15), but his concern for the future changes into a trustful prayer for God's guidance, as was granted to the Jews on their journey to the Promised Land. Here his self-surrender is complete and he hands himself over to the Lord, to be the Lord's guide to a great nation such as England of the nineteenth century in its pilgrimage.

Newman's illness at Sicily was his experience of the celestial messenger touching his lips with 'the coal from the altar,' ²¹ thus freeing him from the bondage of doubt, unworthiness, self-consciousness, and fear, anointing him to deliver the message of the eternal Truth. His trust in Providence becomes complete and now from the deeper harmonies of his inner depth comes the assurance that God: 'Will lead him on' (14). Now the poet is ready to take up the task. With his inherent faith in God, he affirms God's supreme sway in his life and the true necessity of his longing for home in spite of his rootedness in mortality.

The poet now believes that the 'Kindly Light' will lead him to the 'morn' which is a metaphor for Heaven. There he would once again enjoy 'those angel faces smile' (17). For Newman Heaven is associated with his own early childhood at Ham, his beloved home: "Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile" (18), for even as a child, the poet was a visionary. As childhood departed the poet also lost that beloved home and he now longs for the eternal Home. He nostalgically longs for the comfort and assurance he experienced as a boy. As a boy he dreamt of Grey Court house a paradise²² peopled with angels and so the reference bears personal childhood connotations; and at a deeper level it refers to his eternal Home--Heaven.

Some commentators speak of a confusion in the imagery and

remark that the poet confesses as a fault his love of the day in the second stanza while in the third, he prays to Heaven to send him its light as a boon.²³ But it is not so. What the poet rejects in the second stanza is his youthful self-will and his love of intellectual excellence that turn him aside to see objects lit by its 'garish' light. What the poet prays for in the third stanza is a very different light by which he would see and understand things as is destined by the Divine. It is the pure dawning light, the true light of Everlasting Day, as he also refers to in The Dream of Gerontius: "And see Him in the truth of everlasting day" (863).

The movement of the poem is on a fluctuating time. In the first stanza, the verbs used are in the present tense, 'night is dark,' 'am far from home,' 'do not ask to see,' setting the traveller in the gloomy background. Verbs used in the second stanza are in past tense, 'was not ever thus,' 'loved to choose,' 'loved the garish day,' 'pride ruled' evoking deeds of the past life. In the final stanza, the past and the future are brought together, 'hath blest, 'Will lead,' past blessings are remembered and future graces are hoped for. This progression of tenses is one of the reasons for the obvious appeal of the poem.

The title of the poem, "The Pillar of the Cloud" sets it firmly into its scriptural context, and calls to mind powerfully, the exodus of Israel. Here in the poem Newman himself is the Anglican Moses. The Christian is like one of the sons of Israel, journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land. For the Israelities: "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them along the way."²⁴ For them 'the pillar of cloud' was a daytime guide. The poet chooses this symbol when the scene of the poetical journey is in darkness, to throw the main focus of the poem on the sure and 'Kindly Light,' which guides the traveller. God dwells in the

cloud, and though He reveals Himself, He is still hidden. The poet adds an article 'the' to the phrase and makes it "The pillar of the Cloud" which implies that it is the same God who continues to extend His own guidance to His people. 'The cloud' would stand for God while 'the pillar' would mean that beam of light which is of the Lord. The title is a reminder to the Christian that it is a grave mistake to try to walk a path of his own choice in his pilgrimage when 'the pillar of the cloud' is always there to guide and to encourage. The poet's inclusion of the article 'the' has another connotation which would imply that the poet himself feels commissioned to be 'the pillar of the cloud' for the English nation to guide it through the wilderness of the modern waste lands of baffling philosophies and irreligious existence.

The poem is a record of that hallowed disposition, in which men conquer their misgivings in a quiet surrender to the inner light and the Unseen Power. The poet implies that every man is a pilgrim like himself who advances through the darkness of error towards the truth of an Eternal Light. The poem with its refrain: 'Lead thou me on,' confirms the poet's profoundly personal intuition of truth. The image of divine light in the poem stands for Christ first and foremost and then for the Church, both of which were Newman's ways in 'homing' Heaven. The poem with its sincere avowal: "I donot ask to see / The distant scene--one step enough for me," with its nostalgia for the 'angel faces,' seen in childhood, and its unquenchable hope to find them again hereafter, would always strike a responsive chord in every human heart, regardless of what faith he practices. Perhaps one of the reasons for the universal and lasting appeal of the poem is because all human beings are travellers--pilgrims, though not on the via Ecclesia.

The Victorians on the whole cherished the last two lines, for history shows us that there was high mortality among the

young in the Victorian period. The bereaved parents remembered their children when they read these lines. The poet himself would have in mind his own youngest sister, Mary. The metaphor of the angels is appropriate, as there are accounts of Victorian children dying with exemplary resignation. It is said that Queen Victoria in listening to the poem on her deathbed found great assurance that she would soon be reunited to her husband. The last two lines were especially consoling to her.

The poem is an intensely personal expression of strong faith and strong emotions, reaching back to the poet's past, into his guilt, his repentance, his bereavement and his physical suffering. It is also a most suitable reflection for any one experiencing life to be a journey in the dark, but one that is guided to its true haven. Images of journey, of light in darkness, of home, of new morning and rebirth are used here. The strongest image of the poem, however, is that of the pilgrim moving in faith through the darkness, and the recollection of the assurance of God's light experienced in the past. In his recent illness at Sicily, it was a great comfort to the poet to see the light of day after long, dark sleepless nights and he would soliloquize: "O sweet light! God's best gift."²⁵

The words of a single syllable are woven in the lines to a haunting effect and powerful design. As is characteristic of all his poetry, the words are very simple. The words in the poem weave the ideas of uncertainty as 'encircling gloom,' a sense of intellectual sufficiency as 'garish day' and the guidance of Providence as 'Kindly Light.' The short lines are memorable and sustaining--'One step enough for me;' and the refrain with its archaic, 'Thou' inserted among the strong monosyllables, 'Lead thou me on!'. The musical quality of the poem does not allow for any more bold imagery. The words have the freshness and the fineness of a great poem and it is the

most tender of pilgrim songs. It could be compared to the "Mason Song" of Goethe, in its sublime sadness and invincible trust. Both are psalms of life in which faith leads the pilgrim on, heroically to the day beyond.

The Victorians lost in a spiritual wilderness, in the midst of powerful developments of material resources and who lived in a world of uncertainties, and who were path-finders, read in its cry their own individual cry for guidance and for light. To them the imagery of finding one's way in the dark appealed tremendously. But as for Newman he expressed through the poem his renewed humility and willing resignation to be led on by the divine light due to the experience he had during his illness at Sicily. The same imagery retains afresh its magic hold on the hearts of modern men, who also bear the weight of inward struggles in the twentieth century and hear in it their own cry, their groaning for light and guidance. Hence the intense reality and the indescribable charm of the lines continue to lay their magic hold on hearts. These lines continue to have a powerful and incantatory effect on people.

The appeal for guidance is born out of the heart of an unquenchable hope. The world longs for guidance down through centuries, and men 'will' go on hoping till the very end. Hence this prayer is the translation into language of the most appropriate expression of the human desire for supernatural guidance. This could be one of the reasons also why the poem is generally known by that significant phrase: 'Lead, Kindly Light,' instead of its title "The Pillar of the Cloud." As such, the magnetism of the poem would stand the test of time, for it continues to formulate for contemporary men, 'amid the encircling gloom,' their unrest and their need for spiritual help. The poem has been translated into Latin, Arabic, Welsh, German and many other languages. Thus its popularity can be well assessed. Even Mahatma Gandhi, living in an entirely

different milieu at a later time, experienced the spiritual power inherent in the poem. Hence he wrote to a correspondent who found it hard to believe in God, to make Newman's poem "The Pillar of the Cloud," his prayer.²⁶

Newman used simple though telling images in his poetry and they are varied. He found it an apt medium for expressing solemn thoughts, elevated emotions, and for conveying his basic beliefs and philosophy. Recurring images in the poems are that of journey, traveller, light in darkness, shadow, cloud, veil, prison, lyre, music, angels, new morning, rebirth; metaphors for heaven and so on. The two most significant images for the poet were those pertaining to 'home' and 'light.' The image of home brings out his home-loving features, and his need for a shelter in this turbulent world. The Grey Court house at Ham, with its comfort and security, was a mine of psychological strength for him. 'Home' and 'Sea' are two opposite pairs of images, used in the Apologia as well. The poem "Memory" centres round the 'home' image and is connected with one of his earliest memories.

At the age of five, he lay looking at the lighted candles on the windows at Grey Court house²⁷ which he could recall even as an old man. Thus both images were connected with significant childhood experiences, and they held some psychological effect over him. The image of 'light,' was the dynamic pole that urged him onward in his journey. In "The Pillar of the Cloud," there is portrayed the images of 'Kindly Light' and 'encircling gloom.' The poet waited in his bright, warm English home, till he felt assured that a light beckoned him to sail into the dark. The line: "The night is dark and I am far from home" recalls the dark nights of his physical illness. The Dream of Gerontius has the image of 'lone night-watches' in the lowest deep which once again is the reminder of his illness. During his fever, he was purified by a searching and guiding light. The soul

sings a sad perpetual strain until the 'morn' when it would see the Lord, 'in the truth of everlasting day.' The last lines convey the idea that after the 'night trial,' the Angel would waken the Soul 'on the morrow,' which is a reminder of the last two lines of "The Pillar of the Cloud." In The Dream of Gerontius, the life of grace is also compared to light.

A scanning of the poem reveals that, what at first seems to be an iambic pentameter, is not so simple as we take it to be. We notice the stress that is laid on the first three words — 'Lead, / Kindly Light'. Hence we would prefer it to be read rather as a choriamb which gives the lines its fluidity. Newman's knowledge of the Classical and English verse patterns helps him to blend various metres of different tongues to a more complex harmony. The heavy stress on the first syllable 'Lead', tends to give 'Kindly' just a gentle touch, as if the poet means the word 'Kindly' to sound gentle and soothing for one who is forlorn, and is in the dark. The stress on the first syllable provides the emphasis with which a singer should begin the hymn. In the fourth foot of the basic pattern, or the second foot after the choriamb, in the first line, the poet blends together 'the' and 'en' of the phrase 'the encircling gloom,' thus giving an evidence to his musical taste. The poem is given over forty musical settings and though musical tastes have changed considerably since it was first set to music, the poem retains its former popularity and will continue to do so.

Critics consider the poem to constitute "its author's surest title to a place in the ranks of that goodly company, the hymn writers of the universal Church."²⁸ Professor Saintsbury considered it a great poem and felt that it ranked with any piece of sacred verse elsewhere.²⁹ J. Lewis May considered "The Pillar of the Cloud" a more beautiful poem than Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."³⁰ It achieved great popularity as a hymn in the poet's own day. When Fr. Faber's hymn "The Eternal Years" and Newman's "The Pillar of the Cloud" are

placed side by side, the image of the traveller who longs to see by faith just far enough to take a step, is the image that portrays most people's experience. The lasting significance in what the poet sings, the spiritual agony with which he seeks heavenly guidance, the last touching reference to his paradise on earth, an earthly symbol of his heavenly Home, are all woven together skilfully in haunting melody that transcends time and place.

If "The Pillar of the Cloud" portrays the pilgrim's heart-rending cry for supernatural guidance to lead him onward in his journey, the poem "Desolation"³¹ is the divine response the poet receives. The title "Desolation" is paradoxical as the poem is a refutation of desolation. The poet aims at helping the pilgrim who is in desolation to pass through that stage and to experience God's presence and protection in his life. The poet communicates this fundamental Christian truth that God is especially close to us in times of desolation. It is one of those typical Victorian poems which is Scripture based. Such poems enabled the poets to convey Biblical message most persuasively.

By portraying instances from the life of Christ, the poet develops the central idea of the poem. The Biblical characters such as Nathaniel,³² the dejected Apostles at their prayer in the upper room,³³ the disciples on the road to Emmaus,³⁴ and Peter's mother-in-law³⁵ experienced the Lord's intervention, and protection over them. The poet asks the pilgrims to look up to these instances and to draw courage for their Christian warfare even during the worst of circumstances for:

. . .when thou liest, by slumber bound,
 Outwearied in the Christian fight,
 In glory, girt with Saints around,
 He stands above thee through the night. (9-12)

This image of the Lord and his Saints, standing in watch over the wearied, slumber-laden Christian pilgrim is a consoling image to human hearts. A Heavenly army watching over the exhausted and broken down pilgrim on his way till every earthly combat is resolved has a regenerating force inherent in it.

The crowning imagery of the poem which is of the glorified Lord, with His saints hovering over the Christian pilgrims is drawn with extraordinary skill and poetic feeling. The image is an invention of the poet from his knowledge of the Christian doctrines and from the beliefs of the Church. There is something of St. Augustine in Newman's literary creations. For Newman the aspects of things unseen were luminously clear and he tried to impart tremendous significance to them. As a result the poem attains its supersensuous realism in this stanza .

The last stanza does not refer to the miracle Christ performs to save the fear-struck apostles in the boat.³⁶ Instead it is Newman's own message for his fellow pilgrims:

. . .on a voyage, when calms prevail,

And prison thee upon the sea,

He walks the wave, He wings the sail,

The shore in gain'd, and thou art free. (17-20)

In their pilgrim voyage when the boat lies becalmed and they are unable to make any progress on the journey Christ comes to restore the movement forward. He "wings the sail / The shore is gain'd." When the pilgrims are weary and are in a situation like the woman in Padraic Colum's poem "An Old Woman of the Roads," when they face the temptation to build a house and settle down, are at the point of losing sight of their spiritual quest, Christ comes in and gets the storm going. All that a pilgrim should do is build a cairn and continue the journey to its last port.

With his keen psychological insight, Newman adapts the miracle of calming the waves to portray Christ's intervention

when the pilgrim's desolation has depressed his soul and becalmed his forward movement. He depicts a Christ who supplies divine energy to drive the pilgrim forward on his journey. Newman tells the pilgrim that the storms of life are often hidden blessings because they speed the journey towards the goal.

A temptation for the weary pilgrim often is the lure of the calm, when they desire to settle down and build a lasting dwelling place in the quiet, to enjoy 'bright scenes', and "Isaac's pure blessings and a verdant home."³⁷ But Newman tells the pilgrim that Christ will lead him forward "with Paul's sad girdle bound"³⁸ out of the calm back into the storms of life.

Even in the poem "Epiphany-Eve,"³⁹ written earlier, there occurs this image of 'gale' which would further the pilgrim journey despite the impediments:

Or, when day-light blessings fail,
Transport fresh as spice-fraught gale,
Sparks from thee, which oft have lighted
Weary heart and hope benighted. (64-67)

There are also images of 'light' and 'sparks' which refer to Christ who would also light up the beaten paths of the pilgrims.

Though both Keble and Newman made constant use of Biblical stories and incidents in their writings, their treatment of these themes differ. While Keble delighted more in the play of fancy, Newman aimed at getting at the heart of the particular objects and conveyed the supernatural message it contained. His poems are marked by his unique and individual experience of faith and of the Unseen World. Like George Herbert, Newman was deeply devoted to the English Bible and the English liturgy.

However difficult the path may seem as the poem "Humiliation"⁴⁰ depicts, the pilgrim poet considered it his:

. . .happier fate
 The Saviour's Cross to share
 This my hid choice, if not from heaven,
 Moves on the heavenward line. (7-10)

The direction of his pilgrimage is heavenward, and he prays: "Cleanse it, good Lord, from earthly leaven / And make it simply Thine" (11-12). In the poem "Warfare"⁴¹ the poet reminds the pilgrims of the attitude they must have: "O man of God! in meekness and in love, / And waiting for the blissful realms above" (9-10), to be found worthy to be numbered among the elect of Heaven.

In the poem "The Power of Prayer,"⁴² the poet writes: "All may save self:--but minds that heavenward tower / Aim at a wider power, / Gifts on the world to shower—" (8-10). As the poet begins to feel commissioned with such a mission, he sensitively searches for the signs from the Lord as the poem "Semita Justorum"⁴³ describes:

So now, whene'er, in journeying on, I feel
 The shadow of the Providential Hand,
 Deep breathless stirrings shoot across my breast,
 Searching to know what He will now reveal,
 What sin uncloak, what stricter rule command,
 And girding me to work His full behest. (9-14)

Due to his own lack of inner strength, the poet longs for the Lord's support as is shown in the poem "Consolation."⁴⁴

When I sink down in gloom or fear,
 Hope blighted or delay'd,
 Thy whisper, Lord, my heart shall cheer,
 "Tis I, be not afraid!" (1-4)

Even with all his firm resolve to serve as an ambassador of Heaven, the pilgrim was also weak and fragile like any of his companions. Hence it is that this frail pilgrim calls upon Mary, mother of Christ who has been the greatest of pilgrim

leaders and who has ever been a sure guide to pilgrims on their way, to help and to guide him and his companions on their way home:

Such art thou, Holy Mother, in the creed and in the worship of the Church, the defence of many truths, the grace and smiling light of every devotion. In thee O Mary, is fulfilled, as we can bear it, an original purpose of the Most High. He once had meant to come on earth in heavenly glory, but we sinned; and he could not safely visit us, except with a shrouded radiance and a bedimmed Majesty, for He was God. So He came Himself in weakness, not in power; and He sent thee, a creature, in His stead, with a creature's comeliness and lustre suited to our state. And now thy very face and form, dear Mother, speak to us of the Eternal; not like earthly beauty, dangerous to look upon, but like the morning star, which is thy emblem, bright and musical, breathing purity, telling of heaven, and infusing peace. O harbinger of day! O hope of the pilgrim! lead us still as thou hast led; in the dark night across the bleak wilderness, guide us on to our Lord Jesus, guide us home. ⁴⁵

The prayer the pilgrim poet makes seems to energize him with a Heaven sent strength and power. This leads him forward on his pilgrim journey and he even takes up the responsibility of leading his fellow pilgrims. The following chapter traces out the pilgrim leader.

Notes

- 1 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 70-71.
- 2 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 106-107.
- 3 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 107-108.
- 4 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 130.
- 5 Bible, Genesis 26: 1-33.
- 6 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 62-63.
- 7 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 63-64.
- 8 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 67-68.
- 9 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 67-68.
- 10 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 67.
- 11 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 174.
- 12 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 75.
- 13 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 118-119.
- 14 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 119-120.
- 15 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 122-123.
- 16 Bible, Genesis 3: 1-24.
- 17 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 67-68.
- 18 Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss. 152.
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³³ Bible, Luke 24: 36-39.

³⁴ Bible, Luke 24: 13-35.

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³⁶ Bible, Matthew 8: 23-27.

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³⁸ Elisabeth Ann Noel. Diss 130.

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