

overwhelming sense of his own importance. I don't know why Socrate was poisoned while his judges remained in office. I don't know why Jesus Christ was crucified while Pilate sat on the judgment seat and Herod continued to pollute a throne with iniquities. I don't know why, for three hundred years, God's people, sheep of his hand and people of his pasture, walked on burning plowshares under skies of brass while storms of persecution rained upon them in every form of horrible torture and fearful death.

But I do know that that is the way the church conquered the world for Christ. I do know that not one god of its persecutors is left in the world to-day, save as a broken fragment in a temple of dust.

What do I know about pain, and sorrow, and trouble? I know only what every-body knows—I know what has grown out of the heart-soil scarred by the plow and torn by the harrow. I look at the receding storm and I see the splendor of the rainbow. I go into the depths of a murky swamp, and say, "A nest of pestilential fevers." Lo, at my feet the delicate beauty of an orchid. I catch the perfume of the sandal-wood on the edge of the axe. I hear the axes ringing in the forest of Lebanon, and I say, "Death and destruction." Lo the fragrance of the carven beams in the temple. For it is the cedar that we call dead—the tree felled and wrought into shapes of grace and use of worship, not the living cedar in the forest—that gives forth its incense of praise. I search the world over, all its continents, islands, and seas, for the sweetest, tenderest, holiest spot it holds, and I kneel beneath the gnarled olives of dark Gethsemane. My soul is made stronger, my thoughts purer, my life nobler, by its agony of renunciation. I look upon the cross of shame—a Roman instrument of torture and humiliation. Lo, it shines above every crown in the world, it glows with a radiance more enduring than the sun, throughout the length and breadth of civilization—an emblem of authority, by which princes reign! It gleams in the splendor of heaven above the dome of the universe. It glorifies everything that it shines upon.

The contemptuous phrase of a Roman governor, a brutal sneer at the prisoner whom he feared, and a taunt to exasperate the Jews whom he despised — "Jesus of Nazareth, King" —endures forever. Angels echo it in anthems of exaltation, and "the great multitude, which no man could number," and "every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea,"