

world the moon?” And: “Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine. Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine. Follow Light, and do the Right--for man can half-control his doom— Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb. “

In poems of John Keble and J.H. Newman a more simply expressed faith in God the redeemer of fallen man is apparent. The last stanza of Keble’s “Evening Hymn” exhorts God: *“Come near and bless us when we wake, Ere through the world our way we take; Till in the ocean of Thy love, We lose ourselves in Heaven above.”* In Newman’s Dream of Gerontius, the angel gently and beautifully preparing the soul of Gerontius for its time in Purgatory speaks to it in these words: *“Angels, to whom the willing task is given, Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest, And Masses on earth, and prayers in Heaven, Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest”*. Professor Brett delivers a crushing response to atheistic humanism lauded in the poet Swinburne’s words: *“Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things”*. Brett wrote in 1965: *“To us, today, who have witnessed man’s inhumanity to man on a larger scale than perhaps any previous generation, his exultant cry...must not seem so much blasphemous as cruelly ridiculous.”* (1)
Europe: Grandeur and Decline -Stephen S

Entrance antiphon: Let my prayer come into your presence. Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

First Reading: 1Kings 17:10-16

Psalms 145: Response: My soul, give praise to the Lord.

Second Reading: Hebrews 9: 24-28

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Even if you have to die, says the Lord, keep faithful, and I will give you the crown of life. Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 12: 38-44

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose, near the restful waters he leads me.



Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle B, 2023

Weekly Reflection: New Challenges to Faith in 19th Century: (2) Philosophical Thought and Evolution:

Professor R.L Brett’s Introduction to the anthology of 19th century “Poems of Faith and Doubt” addresses two major challenges which tested the faith of many, including a number of English poets. New philosophy of Hegel regarded history as a self-contained and ever-developing process with no place for God. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) argued that the last and positive stage of human thought was one in which a true scientific explanation of nature was given. For Comte and his followers Darwin’s theory of evolution was a great step forward in explaining not only nature but man himself, his behaviour and the organisation of society. Comte was hostile to all religion, particularly Christianity, but felt that men needed something in its place. He proposed the image of collective humanity. This religion of humanity became a trend for many who wished to add to their agnosticism a strong sense of duty and seriousness in support of a humanistic moral law. These included George Eliot and George Meredith. An extreme exponent was Leslie Stephen, a former Anglican vicar, the father of Virginia Woolf, who wrote in 1873: *“Let us shake the dust off our feet, and taking reason for our guide, and Mr Darwin for the best modern expounder of the Universe, go boldly forward to whatever may be in store for us”*. Stephen proposed a humanist morality believing that the survival of the fittest implied the survival of the morally fittest. Darwin’s theory in fact provides no support for this.

Explaining the 1848 revolutions across Europe, A J P Taylor (1) wrote: *“Movement, and a conviction that Utopia could be reached were the essence of 1848: underlying these was a faith in the limitless goodness of human nature.”* Tennyson, a believer in the evolutionary theory and in Christianity, was scathing about faith in man instead of God. Two extracts from “Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After” illustrate this: *“Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon? Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead*