

1849

Human Life

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Recommended Citation

"Human Life." *The Collegian* 1, no. 2 (1849).

Available at: <http://scholar.dickinson.edu/collegian/vol1/iss2/10>

The Collegian is a literary magazine published by the Belles Lettres and Union Philosophical Societies at Dickinson College in 1849. For more information, please contact scholar@dickinson.edu.

puny art of man, which would fetter that independence which receives its charter from heaven.

Though credulity in the supernatural is ridiculed by a large part of mankind, there are few but feel its influence. The selfish philosopher struggles against his better nature—he traces every effect to its natural cause, and with scorn derides the superstitions of the vulgar and bigoted; but when the “icy hand of death” is laid upon him, he feels something for which he cannot account—his false pride deserts him, and in agony of soul he expires believing.—

Our holy religion—all our conceptions of a Deity—our very origin and being, are a mystery. To us a part of the creation is visible and palpable; but this does not prove that nothing more exists. A belief in the existence of supernatural beings upon earth is by no means deserving of ridicule. The mind has a natural tendency towards it until warped by the prejudices of education. Why, then, is this tendency checked? Our wise instructors tell us that it is for our own good—to curb the wandering fancy, and turn the attention to useful objects—to the every-day affairs of life. But we may question their wisdom in viewing the common business of this life of primary importance. This state of being is not the last nor perhaps the first. We go to a land of spirits, and from a land of spirits, perchance, we come. Life is but an atom in eternity. Should we then narrow down all our thoughts to this brief period of existence—confine ourselves to that alone which we can see, in the hope that, fettered to the one idea, earth, we can excel in transient honors and wealth? Will it be any obstacle to our progress to think the spirits of departed friends are hovering around our path to cheer us on to noble deeds? That heavenly beings are continually guarding our wayward steps or smiling upon our virtuous endeavors? That, in short, our earth is not “a mere sepulchral clod,” but a bright world peopled by immortal spirits, who weep over our faults or bear to heaven with joy the records of the just?

HUMAN LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

THERE is no past—but fond remembrance flings
 Its shadowy image o'er us ;
 THERE is no future—hope delusive brings
 Unreal forms before us ;
 THE present only is, then disappears
 In blank nonentity ;
 WHAT, then, is human life? Its fleeting years,
 A point, a hope, a memory.