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# **LEVELS OF LIVING**

Essays on Everyday Ideals

by

**HENRY FREDERICK COPE**

Author of "The Modern Sunday-School in Principle and Practice"

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To My Wife

Not in the sentiment of dedication alone, offering to you what I may have done, but in simple acknowledgment of obligation to you

Elizabeth

best gift of God and inspiration of man

Under the title of "A Sermon For To-day" these short essays, on the art of every-day living in the light of eternal life, were published by *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, through a series of years, and were regularly printed in the Sunday editions of a group of the great dailies. The short sentences were also published with the Sermons under the head of "Sentence Sermons." The courtesy of *The Chicago Daily Tribune* in permitting the publication of these "sermons," with such changes as have seemed best, is gratefully acknowledged.

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## I

### The Higher Levels

*The Real and the Ideal The Bread of Life Life's Unvarying Values*

*The ideal is the mold in which the real is cast.*

*Half of success is in seeing the significance of little things.*

*He finds no weal who flees all woe.*

*You do not make life sacred by looking sad.*

*Sympathy is a key that fits the lock of any heart.*

*Soul health will not come by taking religion as a dose.*

*Many a cloud that we call sorrow is but the shadow of our own selfishness.*

*To live wholly for possessions is to paralyze the life to the possibility of permanently possessing anything.*

*It takes more than willingness to be nothing to make you amount to something.*

*This is never a wrong world to him who is right with its heart.*

### THE REAL AND THE IDEAL

It is probable that from the age of sixteen up to thirty Jesus of Nazareth spent His life in mechanical toil; He made wooden plows, ax handles, and yokes; He served as a carpenter. Then for three years He gave Himself to the ministry of ideal things, exclusively to the service of the spirit.

There is a wonderful satisfaction in making things, in looking over some concrete piece of work accomplished when the day ends. It is a satisfaction that belongs to the artisan. Is it not probable that many said that it was a great pity when Jesus gave up so useful a trade as His? To them He seemed to be but chasing the rainbow.

But to-day who possesses a single one of the things that young carpenter made? And did we possess

them all what better off would the world be? Yet, on the other hand, how ill could this world afford to lose what He gave it by those three years of the service of the ideal.

In our age of things we so easily forget how large is the place of the ideal and the spiritual. Ever estimating our assets in the concrete, we fail to recognize that our real wealth lies in thoughts and things abstract. The permanent possessions of humanity are spiritual. Not acres nor armies, not banks nor business make a nation, but mighty, compelling ideals and traditions.

Jesus, Shakespeare, Browning, Lowell, Emerson left no goods and chattels, no bonds and mortgages; they left inspirations; they bequeathed ideals; living first for the soul, their souls survive and remain to us all. The truly great who still stand after the test of the years are those who have lived for the spirit.

This is as true of the worker and the warrior as of the philosopher and poet. All were inspired by glowing visions; they set their affections on things above the trifles for which we struggle and spend ourselves. They endured as seeing glories to us invisible; therefore their names endure.

The great undertakings of our own day are possible only under spiritual inspirations. No rewards of money only can induce a man to steadfastly conduct affairs of great moment and enterprise; he is buoyed up by a great hope; often the very greatness of the task and the sense of serving great ends carry him on; always he sees the worth in the ideal rather than the wage.

We must learn to measure life with the sense of the infinite. We must not think that a man has failed because he has not left burdened warehouses and bonds. We must cease to think that we can tell whether work be high or lowly by the size of the wage. We need eyes to see the glory of the least act in the light of the glowing motive.

A new estimate is placed on each act when it is measured not by bread alone but by the things of the soul. The mother's care of the children; the father's steady humble toil for them, the faithful watching over the sick, the ministry of the lowly, all have a new glory in the light of the love that leads the way and the spirit that guides those who do the least of these things.

We need to learn for ourselves what is the work that endures. It is a good thing to lay a course of bricks so that it shall be true, but of greater value to the world than the wall that stands firm is the spirit that forces the man to build aright. No man can do even this without an ideal set in his heart, and when the wall shall have fallen the world shall still be enriched by his ideal.

Too many of us are fretting because we are not getting on in the world. Seeing the apparent ease with which some acquire fortune, we become discontented with our small gains. We talk as though fortunes and follies, money and lands were the only things worth while. Yet we know better, for we all find our real joys in other things.

## THE BREAD OF LIFE

There are lives that have bread in abundance and yet are starved; with barns and warehouses filled, with shelves and larders laden they are empty and hungry. No man need envy them; their feverish, restless whirl in the dust of publicity is but the search for a satisfaction never to be found in things. They are called rich in a world where no others are more truly, pitifully poor; having all, they are yet lacking in all because they have neglected the things within.

The abundance of bread is the cause of many a man's deeper hunger. Having known nothing of the discipline that develops life's hidden sources of satisfaction, nothing of the struggle in which deep calls unto deep and the true life finds itself, he spends his days seeking to satisfy his soul with furniture, with houses and lands, with yachts and merchandise, seeking to feed his heart on things, a process of less promise and reason than feeding a snapping turtle on thoughts.

It takes many of us altogether too long to learn that you cannot find satisfaction so long as you leave the soul out of your reckoning. If the heart be empty the life cannot be filled. The flow must cease at the faucet if the fountains go dry. The prime, the elemental necessities of our being are for the life rather than the body, its house. But, alas, how often out of the marble edifice issues the poor emaciated inmate, how out of the life having many things comes that which amounts to nothing.

The essential things are not often those which most readily strike our blunt senses. We see the shell first. To the undeveloped mind the material is all there is. But looking deeper into life there comes an awakening to the fact and the significance of the spiritual, the feeling that the reason, the emotions, the joys and pains that have nothing to do with things, the ties that knit one to the infinite, all constitute the permanent elements of life.

Because man is a spirit his life never can consist wholly in things; he must come into his heritage of the soul wealth of all the ages; he must reach out, though often as in the dark, until across the void there come voices, the sages and the seers, the prophets, and the poets speaking the language of the soul. In these he finds his food nor can his deeper hunger be assuaged until it thus is fed.

Because man is a spirit and gradually is coming into the dominant spirit life in which things shall count for less and thought and character for more, he seeks after his own kind. The deeps of life have their relationships. The spirit of man cries out after the father of spirits. By whatever name men have called the most high they ever have sought after Him, the eternal, who would be one with them in soul, in all that is essential and abiding in being.

Every religion, every philosophy, every endeavour after character and truth is but the cry of humanity for word with God. Hearing His word on any lip the heart of man answers with joy. The words of eternal truth have been the food of the great in all ages. Fainting in the fight the message from the unseen, the echo of everlasting verities, has revived their spirits; they have fought the fight that despises things and seeks truth.

Who would not exchange a mess of pottage for the benediction from a father's lips? Who is so dead he no longer finds more satisfaction in truth and love and beauty than in food or furniture? And why are we so foolish as to seek to satisfy ourselves with things that perish, while down to the least blade of creation earth is laden with unfading riches and God is everywhere?

If we might but learn this lesson, we people of the laden hand and the empty heart, that since life is more than digestion and man more than beast or machine, since determining all is the spiritual world, they only are wise who set first things first, who use the garnered experience of the past and the opportunities of the present to the enriching of the soul, who listen among all the voices of time for the words that proceed from the lips of Him who inhabiteth eternity.

## LIFE'S UNVARYING VALUES

Life is the business of learning to use things as tools, the real as the servant of the ideal, to make conditions even better that character may grow the more, to serve in the making of things and the enduring of things under the inspiration of the full and glorious purpose of life, the realizing of the best for ourselves, the rendering of our best to others.

Only an age that has lost both heart and intellect—the divinely given measuring rods of life—will think of estimating a life by the money measure. It is a shallow world that knows a man as soon as and only when it has scheduled his marketable assets; nor is it a happy augury for a nation when it acquires the habit of estimating its men by the length of the catalogues of their possessions.

A period of outer prosperity is always in danger of being one of inner paralysis. Luxury is a foe to life. Character does not develop freely, largely, beautifully in an atmosphere of commercialism. A moral decline that but presages enduring disaster is sure to succeed the supremacy of the market.

The great danger is that we shall set the tools of life before its work, that we shall make life serve our business or our ambitions instead of causing ambitions, activities, and opportunities all to contribute to the deepening, enriching, and strengthening of the life itself. In the details of making a living it is easy to lose sight of the prime thing, the life; it is easy to forget that the great question is not, what have you? but, what are you?

Life cannot consist in things any more than silk can consist of shuttles, or pictures of brushes and palettes. Life is both process and product; but things and fame and power are no more than the tools and machinery serving to perfect the product. Life must consist in thoughts, experiences, motives, ideals—in a word, in character. A man's life is what he is.

But what a man is will depend on what he does with the things he has or may have. Let him once set the possession of things as his loftiest ideal, let this avarice of things enter the heart and speedily the love of the good will leave. To that god all honour, all truth loving, all gentleness and humanity are sacrificed. When possession becomes life's ruling passion it doesn't take long for principle to be forgotten.

The danger to-day is not that our people will fail in the world's contests because they lack either money, mind, or muscle. We are in little danger from illiteracy or from business incompetency; but we are in danger from moral paralysis, due to undue pressure on the money nerve. We have talked before the youth in the home and amongst ourselves on the street as though the only thing worth living for was money, as though they alone were great who had it and they only to be despised who had it not.

The danger is neither in our market, our commerce, nor our laws; the danger is in our own hearts. No matter how world-potent our merchandise, how marvellous our mechanical and material powers, how brilliant our business strategy, all will not avail to silence the voice, "Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee." Then whose shall these things be?

We need, not fewer things, not the return to an age of poverty or dreary destitution; we need more power over things; to let the man, so long buried beneath the money and the lands and houses, come to the top; to set ourselves over our things; to make them serve us, minister to our lives and our purposes in living.

There must be an elevation of standards, the institution of new valuations, clearer, nobler conceptions of what living means. Boys and girls must be taught from the beginning that life is more than self-serving, more than fame or glory; it is the service of humanity. A passion for humanity will cure the passion for gold, will teach the true value of life as something that only the infinite can estimate and will give to the heart those true riches that do not tarnish and that cannot be stolen.

## II

Invisible Allies

*More Than a Fighting Chance The Unseen Hand The One in the Midst*

*Logic may illumine, but love leads.*

*The religion that produces no sunshine is all moonshine.*

*Imaginary evils have more than imaginary effects.*

*He who lays out each day with prayer leaves it with praise.*

*Light from above is for the path below.*

*Singing of heaven gives no certainty of singing in heaven.*

*It is better to have your bank in heaven than your heaven in a bank.*

*The burdens of earth demand that our hearts be nourished with the bread of heaven.*

*There are too many hungry for love for any ever to talk of suffering from loneliness.*

*The man who lives with God does not have to advertise the fact.*

## II

### MOKE THAN A FIGHTING CHANCE

Who has not cried out, in haste but still in anguish: "Alas! All things are against me; foes are many and friends there are none!" The roads to pessimism are many; but surely this is the shortest one, to get to think that life is but a conflict waged single-handed against great odds, a long story of struggle, difficulties, pains, disappointments, temptations, failures, wounds, ending only in death.

Even though you escape that chronic jaundiced view of life there are seasons of depression when it seems easy to get out of bed on the wrong side and to plow all day into stumps instead of in the good, clear ground. Ever we need the vision that Elisha of old gave to his young man, to see the hills about us alive with our allies. Otherwise it is easy to conclude the fates fight against us.

How slight is the evidence on which men base their gloomy conclusions! The pessimist always argues from a single instance to a general law. If he strikes a poor peach on top he throws the whole basket away—or sells them as soon as he can. He insists on sitting square on the cactus bunch when there is only one on the whole bench-land. He then becomes an authority on cactus. If he can discover a few foes on the horizon he is blind to a regiment of friends close at hand.

But the seers, our poets and teachers, have a wider vision; they seek the glory rather than the gloom and they tell us that every man has more friends than foes. This is the song of those who told us long ago of Providence, the one who backs a man up and fights on his side and furnishes him in the hour of need. This is the song of Lowell, Tennyson, Whittier, and Browning. Life is not a lone-handed fight against unnumbered foes; it is not a losing fight to any who will fight it well.

Every force in this world works with the man who seeks the good. This is a right world and only he who fights the right faces the unconquerable. A man may meet rebuffs, battle's tides may sweep back and forth, but in the end, as it has ever been in all the long story of man's conflict with nature, so in the conflict with every other foe, he is bound to win. This is as true in the individual life of every fighter as nature and history show it to be in universal life.

On our side there is the great world of the unseen. Little do we know of it, but still that little gives us confidence to believe it is peopled with our allies. Our fairest hopes of good angels may be delusions as to details, but they are essentially true, being born of an eternal verity.

The gospel of good hope declares there is One over all, the friend of all; greater is He that is with you than any against you; greater is He than your temptations, your adversaries, your difficulties, and your sorrows. This was what the great Teacher came to tell men, that God was on their side, seeking to help them, loving, caring, coöperating, leading them into the life of victory over every enemy.

Let a man face life in this confidence and he is invincible. He goes forth and an unseen army goes with him. He gains the seer's vision to see even the plotting of the enemy and the forces that fight against him all working for his good. From many combats he gains strength for the decisive struggle. All things work together for good. He serves the right, the truth, the things that are eternal; he fights for character, for manhood, and the good; and the eternal forces that rule the universe fight by his side. He beholds the hills full of the hosts of heaven; though he has no time to enjoy the vision he knows they are there, his allies, his assurance of ultimate victory.

## THE UNSEEN HAND

The mightiest and the eternal forces fight ever on the side of the right. True, things do not always look that way. Sometimes Napoleon's sneer about God being on the side of the largest battalions seems to have truth in it. But ere long we see the large battalions swept away before the strange, unaccountable, and irresistible power of an insignificant body having truth and God on its side.

The man who takes up the struggle for truth, who puts his hand to the sword for the oppressed, for the right, finds himself holding a two-handed weapon, and if he grasps firmly the one hilt it is as though there were an omnipotent hand grasping the other. He who fights worthily, in fitting battle, never fights alone.

It is not that some omnipotent person steps down from a throne in the heavens and plunges into the battle; it is that every time a man steps out for right and truth he places himself in accord with eternal spiritual forces that give themselves to him and his work. It is not that God comes to fight for a man so much as that a man finds himself fighting beside God; entering this battle, he sees that where he thought none had been serving heaven had long been waging the contest.

It is so easy, like old Elijah, to think that you alone are left to witness for truth, to feel the loneliness of standing for things noble and worthy, to become oppressed with the hopelessness of the minority in which you find yourself. When real and concrete things press upon us and their uproar is in our ears we become deaf and blind to the greater forces that from the beginning of time have been working for the best.

Every great reform has looked like a losing movement; it has begun with most insignificant minorities; it has met with violent and well-organized opposition; its supporters have often been faint-hearted, and yet ultimately it has overcome always. As men have fought on they have found an unseen hand grasping the sword beside theirs.

We all need this sense of God with us, helping us in our lives. This gives courage and confidence. It does not mean weak reliance upon heaven to do things for us; it means entering on the things that look impossible because we know that, if they are right, every great force in the universe will coöperate with us.

This is the fine sense in which the human enters into partnership with the heavenly. This determines whether we may call our work divine or not. It is to be judged, not by whether it is pleasant or looks respectable, but by whether it is the work in which we know the Lord of all can lay His hand to the tool

or weapon alongside of our hands.

With a consciousness like this, one attempts anything. The practical question is not, "Can this be done?" but "Ought this to be done?" "Is it such a task as will enlist the coöperation of the eternal spirit of truth and right?" With the cry of Gideon on their lips, men have fared forth facing fearful odds; their hands have fallen from their swords, but the unseen hand has carried them on until the cause has won.

The Almighty, who would have love and peace and righteousness to prevail, needs your hand for His sword; the sword of the Lord is vain without Gideon. Ideals and spiritual forces may exist, but men must be their realizations, their visible hands. God's work waits for you to put your hand to the sword; you will find His already there.

This helping hand is always unseen; spiritual things are often apparently unreal. God cannot be reduced to figures nor to material elements. This hand that works with ours may mean one thing to one and another to another. What we all need is to simply grasp the great fact of the spiritual forces that strengthen every good resolve, that give vigour in every good work, and give victory at last to the right.

## THE ONE IN THE MIDST

There are always a thousand blind men to one who can see. All have eyes, but not all have vision. The things we most need and the things for which we most long are often nearest to us, while we, with eyes fast shut, grope our way to the place where we think they ought to be. The best things are the things we miss. The crowd by the fords of the Jordan was longing to see the Messiah; yet of them all there was only one, the son of the desert, who saw that He was actually with them already. John had eyes that pierced the husk of things. He looked on this son of the carpenter and a thousand years of prophecy sank into insignificance beside its fulfillment; the multitude became as nothing beside the all glorious Son of Man. He alone knew his Lord, because he alone looked with eyes of love.

John announced the sublime central truth that all the world's great seers have declared; God is in His world. Man is an animal who seeks God; he finds Him when his eyes are opened. Some are looking for Him in the records of His ways with men; many are hoping to see Him in some other world; a few see Him by their side.

Some, priding themselves on their spiritual vision, and boastfully describing God as He was or God as He will be, have eyes of stone when it comes to seeing God as He is. They do not stop to think that we want a God in the present tense—a God in our homes, on our streets, in our affairs. And others say, this thing is unthinkable, for, if you say that this is a spiritual presence, you at once remove the whole question from touch with real things.

They forget that the most real things lie beyond the senses. Who ever saw mother-love? Yet who will not believe in it? Ambition, affection, pity, memory, hope; these are the real things, the lasting things; these are the spiritual things. No one ever saw these things, and yet they can be seen everywhere; it only needs the vision; we all have seen them at times.

There are the selfish, gross, and sensual who tell us there is no love in the world; and there are those to whom every common bush is aflame with God. So hearts that have forsaken the good see nothing but a God-forsaken world; and, in this same world, hearts that are lifted up find Him everywhere, they see Him in the movements of history, in the forces of nature, they hear Him in the hum of commerce and in the silence of the fields, in every human voice they catch His tone. He is ever in the midst. He is more than a force, a dream, a thought. He is to men to-day what He was to men when He walked their streets and touched their sick; all that we think He would have been in that long ago He is to-day.

Personal? Yes, that He may reach persons, for we cannot know impersonal love or impersonal help. His personality turns the universe from an institution into an organism. Yet more than personal; this one in the midst is infinite; He is the whole where we are but fractions. But He does not hide Himself in His infinity; He is "among you," with men. Not by descent into the grave of the past, nor by ascent into heaven do we find Him; He is here, on every hand. This it is that transforms individual character, to know that He is by my side; this it is that solves our problems, to see Him linking my fellow to me; this it is that gives strength, to hear His voice; this it is that gives hope, to know He is working with us; this it is that makes burdens bearable, to know that He is sympathetic and strong. This one in the midst explains suffering, inspires heroism, is the promise and the potency of all the possibilities of the sons of men.



### III

The Sovereignty of Service

*Self and Service My Soul or My Service The Satisfaction of Service*

*The fruits of sacrifice become the roots of love.*

*A tin halo makes a fine trap for a man to tangle himself in.*

*It takes the base line of two worlds to get a correct elevation of any life.*

*Life is always a dull grind to the man who thinks only of the grist.*

*Knocking the saints will not open the doors of paradise.*

*Capacity for that heaven comes from creating this one.*

*Another man's burden is the Christian's best badge.*

*The only way to lift life is to lay life down.*

*It doesn't take long to choose between a sinner who swears once in a while and a saint who makes every one swear all the while.*

*You cannot lift folks while you are looking down on them.*

### III

#### SELF AND SERVICE

There is such a thing as supremely selfish self-denial. A man retires into the monk's petic seclusion; he isolates himself from interest in the world battles; he shuts himself from sympathy with the struggles of business, civil, and even social life. To him these things are carnal. He is engrossed with the complication of interpretations of languages long dead, or with visions of an unknown heaven, and this, he thinks, is living the life of self-denial.

The denial of self is not the death of self; it is the leading of the best self into larger life. It is not the dwarfing of the life; it is its development into usefulness. It is not the emasculation of character; it is the submission and discipline of the life to new and nobler motives.

He best denies himself who best develops himself with the purpose of serving his fellows. What Jesus meant was that if any man would be one of His he must cease to make his own selfish pleasures, ambitions, and passions the end of his living; he must make the most of himself that he might have the more to give to the service of mankind; he must make the one motive and end of his life the benefit and help of every other man.

That kind of a life means a change of centre. Instead of regarding the universe as revolving about itself it sees that self as but part of the great machinery of life, planned and operating for the good of all. A man begins to deny himself as soon as he begins to love another. Even a yellow dog may act to deflect the heart from its old self-centre. The love of kin and family, of friends, and associates all serve to strengthen the habit of self-denial.

The fewer people a man takes into his plan of life the more likely is he to be selfish. But some lives are but the more selfish because they take in all mankind and look on them as designed to contribute to their single enriching. That kind of a life commits suicide; ever grasping and never giving it dies of plethora. It had never learned that strange secret of the best self-development, sacrificing service.

We need to guard ourselves against the delusion that the denial of oneself means the impoverishment of the life. There can be no true giving of the life in service unless there is a wise enriching of the self, a thorough fitting for that service. The more of a man you are, the brighter your intellect, the broader your sympathies, the better your service to the world may be. The sloth that sinks the soul in indifference to its own development is the most sinful of all forms of selfishness.

This way of denial is more, the Master tells His disciples, than an emptying of the life. If some of the cares of self are cast out the burdens of others more than take their place. It is a full life, overflowing with the interests, the fears, loves, hopes, and longings of other lives. It bears the cross, not of an

ornamental, vanity-serving glory, but the cross of a world's sin and sorrow.

Each man must carry his cross not on his breast but on his heart and brain. It is what he can do, what he can plan, suggest, undertake towards saving this world. The cross of discipleship will be to some statesmanship, to others science, to others the daily service of a home or the work in the shop; it is the kindly word, the cheering look, the lift by the way; it is whatever is done in unselfish desire to make life better, to bring men nearer to one another and to the Father of all.

You have only to look at the great Teacher to know what self-denial and cross bearing really mean, and you have only to follow Him to fully carry out their principles. To Him they meant the life of doing good, of seeking the sorrowing, befriending the forsaken, helping the helpless. They who follow Him lead the world; they who seek to minister instead of being ministered to are the world's masters. The value of every life must be measured at last not by what it has gathered to itself but by what it has given for the enriching and help of the whole life of the world.

## MY SOUL OR MY SERVICE

There is no more subtle temptation than that which sets the soul as a hindrance to the service we should render. A surprise awaits him who carefully will compare the emphasis laid upon the individual soul and its salvation by the modern church with the place given this in the teachings of the Bible. Perhaps he will find in modern preaching, with its insistent appeal to men to save their own souls, an explanation of prevalent selfishness. The moral effect of urging a man to save his soul is not much better than that which comes from advising him to save his skin at any cost.

The most serious objection ever made to religion is that it produces a narrow, self-centred type of mind. That type of religion cannot be right, regardless of its doctrinal orthodoxy, which produces a wrong type of men and women. But may not failure here be accounted for by the selfish basis on which men build the plea for what they call personal salvation?

What could be more selfish than this continual appeal to fear, this urging of men to escape from punishment, to make sure of a house in the heavenly city, this offering of crowns and perpetual rest, plenty and peace, this emphasis on the great object of saving your own soul? It is opposite directly to what the great Teacher told men. Did He not say that the man who would save his own life should lose it?

The concentration of mind on the self, whether in the name of religion or in any other name, is but moral suicide. People who have no other object in life than that of saving their own souls are but little better than those whose whole object is to fatten, protect, and keep safe their bodies.

But Christianity must be perverted greatly to make it teach men to set their own interests first. It is the religion of the other man. Its appeal is not to the love of self, but to the love of society. It offers a way of salvation, not as a thing desirable for your exclusive use, but as the pathway for all lives, for all the people. Its tree of life is not for a single pair, but for the healing of the nations.

True religion is not in self-centred culture, but in the culture of all through the service of the single ones and the culture of the one through his service for all. Only in the atmosphere of service does the soul grow, expand, and find itself. To live in a circle is to die; it is the centrifugal life that finds salvation. They court death who seek only their own lives; they find life who, disregarding death and loss, seek only to make others live.

Religion is not simply a cure for my ills. True, it does cure many of them, but only that I may be better able to do its work. It is a great cause, a mighty project, commanding the noblest enthusiasms and the highest efficiency of effort, the project of bringing this whole world to salvation. And that not the salvation of a mental condition but of the perfection of its whole being, the realization of its highest possibilities, the full noontide of the day of God.

Is not this enough to satisfy any man and to call forth the best in him, that he should in some way serve this glorious ideal? Is not this man's purpose in this world even as it was the purpose of the one who called Himself the Son of Man? What nobler summary could any life have than His, that He went about doing good? How quickly would that kingdom of heaven come if this were the program of every life!

Let but a man do his duty towards this shining ideal, let him but be lifted up, carried along in the mighty enthusiasm it ought to engender, and his own soul, his own development, his character perfection will take care of itself. No man ever did any great work without becoming greater himself, and greatness never was found in any other way. This is an unvarying law. Service is the secret of

culture.

The pious hypochondriac is sure to be a sickly soul. The best thing you can do for your soul is to forget that you have one, just as the healthy man forgets he has a heart or liver. The self-forgetting service is the secret of happiness, of full finding of self. Freedom in self-giving brings fullness in living.

In the right life the hour of prayer, the quiet thought, the search for abstract truth, may all have their place; but it is only the place that the wise workman gives to his meals. He does not live for these things; they are but ministrants to his work. He uses everything that will make him a better workman; but not because he sees the workman as his end. He forgets himself in the perfection of that he seeks to make. The saving of the soul, the culture of the self, as an end is shame and suicide; as a means to service it is life and peace and perfection.

## THE SATISFACTION OF SERVICE

A man always thinks more of his work than of his wages. He would never be content to toil day in and day out but for the thought that somehow to some one his work was worth while. Neither wages, nor salary, nor any other cash consideration would of itself be sufficient to satisfy him. The workman is proud of the product of his hands; his reward is in that he has made; the good shepherd thinks more of the flock than of their fleece or his pay.

Satisfaction in work can only come from service rendered. Whether a man be plowing or preaching, sweeping the streets or building empires, his work is only worthy if his motive be the good he is doing, the value of the work itself. We call the man who preaches a minister, a servant. There is no more honourable title, but it belongs to every one who seeks to do any worthy work in the world.

The purpose of living is service, therefore the business of religion must be the cultivation of proficiency in service. The work of Christianity is to teach men how to be most valuable and useful as children and parents, as neighbours and citizens, how to make the most of their lives and to do the most with them. It aims to bring the race to its highest efficiency.

Religion reveals to man the worth-while object of all his endeavours, to work as a servant for others. Never was Jesus more glorious than when He stooped to lift the palsied, to heal the sick, to feed the hungry. He found His right to rule men by His exercise of the privilege of serving them. The sheep belong to the good shepherd because he gives his life to them.

This marks the true follower of the great Teacher to-day; his business is to serve, he makes living an investment for humanity. He is commanded to lose his life, to be willing to give up, to sacrifice all in self-denial, to take his cross and suffer persecution and loss in this way of walking after his Master.

But he is not told to throw his life away as a worthless thing. He is to lose it as the seed is lost in the sowing, as the money in the investing; to sacrifice it as the tool is sacrificed to that which it is carving. He who would be of real service to the world must cultivate the best in himself. If living is seed sowing, then the seed must be good or the harvest will be thin.

True altruism finds right expression first in self-care. It is a man's business to be strong, healthy, sane, trained, developed; to be the best kind of a man, complete in all his faculties, that he may have the more to offer to the service of his fellows. There is no merit in offering the wrecked body and soured mind. If you are going to give your life to the world you must make it worth the giving.

Heaven's work demands the finest tools. Nothing is too good for the service of humanity. There is a good deal more religion in the honest attempt to make the most of yourself, to keep health, to secure education and culture, in order that you may have the larger, better, wealthier self to use in service than in unending ascetic exercises, prayers, devotions, meditations, mumbling, or visions of things spiritual.

The only way you can prove the genuineness of your religion is by your gifts to the children of God, your own brothers about you. There is no gift that begins to compare in value with a well-trained, well-equipped, strong and clean life. We cannot all give gold or lands, or even learning to men, but we can all give lives, and that which heaven and earth both have a right to expect is that we shall give the best lives we can.

## IV

The Right to Happiness

*The Power of Happiness The Secret of Happiness The Folly of Anxiety*

*Happy is that happy makes.*

*Heaven leaves the heart when hatred enters.*

*The man who is so wise that he never laughs is the greatest of fools.*

*When your face spells failure it's no use talking of the glory of your faith.*

*To set a child towards gladness is to incline him towards God.*

*The graces do not grow in gloom.*

*There's no argument equal to a happy smile.*

*Stealing sorrow is as much a sin as acquiring stolen joys.*

*Life's music is never perfect without the chord of pain.*

*Happiness is never found by dodging my neighbour's sorrows.*

## IV

### THE POWER OF HAPPINESS

Instead of the strength of your faith being marked by the length of your sighs, the genuineness of your religion is to be known by its joyfulness. The same God who gives the sunlight and the smiling fields, who makes the brooks to laugh through the meadows and the stars to sing at night, would rather see smiles than frowns on the faces of His children. His glory is not in gloom but in gladness. He designed this world for happiness, and religion is but the pursuing of His plans for the good of His children.

That which is holy must be happy. Artificial sadness is always sinful. A church is not sacred because it looks like a sepulchre; music is not sacred because all the spring is taken out of it. You do not keep a day sacred to divine ends by making it dismal. It is a religious duty resting on all to cultivate happiness, to make this world less sad.

No matter how sincere a man may be, if his sanctity results only in sorrow to others its satisfaction to him must count for nothing. There is a great deal of piety that needs an operation to cut the bands that bind its heart and reduce the inflammation of its spleen. Happiness is the very health of religion. If religion does not give right relations to those things that determine the tone and colour of life it is a failure.

But true happiness can never be selfish. It grows only by giving. No one can eat a feast by himself. Happiness is not found on lonely mounts of vision. It is a fair, refreshing stream that flows through the dusty ways of daily life. Its waters are never so sweet and cool to you as when you seek them for others. None ever find it who go only with their own pitchers. The reason so many would-be saints are sad is because they will not be other than selfish.

It is not strange that men who love this heaven-born life of ours should turn away from the religion that represented every happy, joyous human thing as an enormous offense against its God. Once men gathered together every dark and depressing thought and thing and said these constitute the divine in this world; they looked out through the smoked glasses of sanctimony and declared that every glad, generous hearty impulse and action must be evil because such things gave happiness.

The old boundary line between the pain that was piety and the pleasure that spelt perdition has almost passed away. Men now know that there is pain and loss in the way of sin, that the way of the transgressor is hard; they learn by tasting that the fruits of righteousness are joy and peace. The age demands what the Lord of all has ever intended, that religion should send men on their way with the vigour of happier hearts, with the upwelling love for men that should drive the squalor, misery, despair, and heart-aches of sin before it.

Life has its work and it has its sorrows; but they ought both to be for its enriching. The business of religion is to teach us that understanding and adjustment of life which will make it a feast of fat things, to teach us that the God of all desires the good of all. The more true piety—the seeking for the loving will of the all wise and loving—there is in this world the more pleasure there will be in it.

This happiness is the cure for the madness that some call pleasure. Life is a mockery indeed to those whose only hope is for the hours of leisure in which to drink the deadening drafts of excitement, the lethal cup that only hides life's misery by paralyzing the faculties against the possibilities of real pleasure. If men might only hear again the call of Him who bade the weary and heavy laden to come; if they might but know that His way of life can give strength, rest, peace, joy, what an enriching life might have.

Make life happier and you will make it holier. Make it full of pleasure—not that of a fool's paradise—but that of peace with heaven's plans, with the joy of knowing that over all is infinite love, the strength that comes from knowing right is invincible, the tender and sweet joys that spring up at the touch of human love. Go your ways to make them paths of gladness, to show love shining through sorrow, to give love in the name of the Lord of love and yours shall be religious service indeed.

## THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

How did your Puritan forefathers dispose of the text which in their day read, "A merry heart is a continual feast." Did they explain it away by saying that the man was made anyway for fasting and not for feasting? Perhaps underneath their austere exterior they, after all, knew something of deep joys and unending sources of refreshing happiness.

In their teaching they made the mistake of insisting that it was necessary to seem sad in order to please the Most High. We make the mistake of being sad in order to please ourselves. Their misery at least had the grace of a high motive; ours is born of a short-sighted selfishness that grasps at the shadow of a fleeting satisfaction and loses the substance of lasting joy.

Happiness is the highest aim of life, higher than holiness or usefulness, because it must include both. To us it is so unfamiliar that we do not know it from frivolity; we seek the excitement of some pleasing sensation, and, rising to its stimulus, we fall afterwards into the reaction of misery. Happiness is the poise, calm, strength, and spring of the life fully in harmony with all things good and true.

Nothing praises God better than a happy disposition. Many have thought to give Him glory by learned treatises on His majesty and mystery. But a little child, so happy that he only can kick and crow, praises the Almighty more effectively and even devoutly than does the theologian who only can offer his bloodless speculations.

The great Father gives His children a world brimming over with joy, with laughing meadows, with smiling morns, with rippling bird song, and to man He gives faculties of immeasurable happiness. Life is learning the law of happiness and practicing its use and service.

But what is the secret of happiness? How can we learn to be happy when life has so much to make us sad? The praise of happiness does not take away the fact of sorrow or solve its dark problem. There remain the million aching hearts and all the griefs of a world. True. God forbid that we should lose our sorrows; that were to make this a sad world indeed. Our cares are but part of joy's curriculum. Learning their lesson, bearing their load is essential to deep, lasting happiness.

It is not the life of the butterfly experience that is firm, calm, serene in times of storm and stress. It is the life that by loads of care has been forced to strike its roots down to the rocks. There are some lives that seem to run over with a happiness that is full of refreshing to all who know them, and these have come out of great tribulation.

At first the multiplication table is a burden; later, when mastered, it becomes a wonderful bearer of burdens. To wear a careworn, fretful look, to go through life shedding misery, is to confess that we have not learned our lesson, that we are dunces in life's school.

The secret of happiness is in grasping the significance of living, to learn that we live for things other and higher than those mad follies and fading prizes for which men sell their bodies and souls and fret out their nerves and hearts. No man can be happy whose heart is set on the changing fashion of things or who looks for satisfaction in things.

The lover is happy because he has discovered his prize and is enthralled by a pursuit that makes all other things seem mean and paltry. Men are happy in proportion as they yield themselves to the best,

as they tune their hearts to strike the highest key of their lives. Paul is happier in the dungeon, where he can be true to his ideal, than Nero on the throne without one.

There is feast in days of famine for those who have the inner eyes for the riches of life. You always can find in this world what your heart is looking for. But you cannot satisfy your heart on everything you may chance to find, and until the heart is satisfied and the deeper needs of the life are met there is no happiness.

The search for happiness is not altogether selfish. Few things can we do that will help others more than the cultivation of serene strength and cheer in ourselves. Not the soulless, set smile, but the strength and sympathy that flow from a life fixed in confidence in eternal right and good and unfailing love.

## THE FOLLY OF ANXIETY

The great Teacher does not say that we are not to be thoughtful, or provident; but He insists that no event can be provided for by anxiety, by fretting over it before it comes. Half the people on our streets look as though life was a sorry business. It is hard to find a happy looking man or woman. Worry is the cause of their woebegone appearance. Worry makes the wrinkles; worry cuts the deep, down-glancing lines on the face; worry is the worst disease of our modern times.

Care is contagious; it is hard work being cheerful at a funeral, and it is a good deal harder to keep the frown from your face when you are in the throng of the worry worn ones. Yet, we have no right to be dispensers of gloom; no matter how heavy our loads may seem to be we have no right to throw their burden on others nor even to cast the shadow of them on other hearts.

Anxiety is instability. Fret steals away force. He who dreads to-morrow trembles to-day. Worry is weakness. The successful men may be always wide-awake, but they never worry. Fret and fear are like fine sand, thrown into life's delicate mechanism; they cause more than half the friction; they steal half the power.

Cheer is strength. Nothing is so well done as that which is done heartily, and nothing is so heartily done as that which is done happily. Be happy, is an injunction not impossible of fulfillment. Pleasure may be an accident; but happiness comes in definite ways. It is the casting out of our foolish fears that we may have room for a few of our common joys. It is the telling our worries to wait until we get through appreciating our blessings. Take a deep breath, raise your chest, lift your eyes from the ground, look up and think how many things you have for which to be grateful, and you will find a smile growing where one may long have been unknown.

Take the right kind of thought—for to take no thought would be sin—but take the calm, unanxious thought of your business, your duties, your difficulties, your disappointments and all the things that once have caused you fear, and you will find yourself laughing at most of them. In some you will see but friends in disguise, and in others puny foes decked out as giants. But begin to dread them, brood over them, look at them with eyes prejudiced with fear, and the least difficulties rise like mountains. In winter some people worry themselves into malaria over the mosquitoes they may meet next summer.

Mistaken ideas of religion are responsible for a great many of the unnecessary wrinkles on the human face. Too many have thought it would be impossible to be happy in two worlds, and so, having elected happiness in the one which they thought would last longest, they have no choice but to be unhappy in this one. In fact, some seem to suppose that the greater their misery here the more intense will their bliss be there. If heaven is to be bought that way certainly many are paying full price for it.

Burdens we all must bear; but they need not break us. Sorrows we all must share; but they need not unmake us. They will not if we have learned the Teacher's secret of living; He, the man of sorrows, was the man who could bequeath to His friends His joy. To Him life lost its anxiety, because the chief things of life were not food or raiment, or even social standing, but manhood and unselfishness to men, and the possibilities of these were as easily realized in need and adversity as in riches and prosperity.

*The Great School The Purpose of the Course The Price of Perfection*

*A good many resolutions die of heart failure.*

*No man possesses more religion than he practices.*

*When men say "our faults" they usually mean yours.*

*There are no delights in the worship that dodges duty.*

*When fear gets into the pulpit faith goes out of the pews.*

*It's not the man with a putty backbone who is most truly resigned to the will of God.*

*When a man buys a horse on its specifications he is likely to call his folly faith and its consequences the dispensation of Providence.*

*It is folly to hope to have a clean heart when you pay no attention to what enters its doorways.*

*Some folks think they have the house of character because they possess the plans of virtue.*

*It is folly to talk of being guided by the light of your conscience when you take pains to keep it in the dark.*

## V

### THE GREAT SCHOOL

With all our learning the greatest lesson before us is this one of living right, of finding our full heritage and filling our places as men and women in this world. If our systems of education fail to teach us how to live they fail altogether.

The great need of our day is that we shall train the conscience to right moral judgment, that we shall educate all for the business of living, and that we shall so educate all that we shall not only have a generation of bright, smart, money-making or fame-making machines, but that we may have clean, upright, truth-loving, self-reverencing, God-fearing men and women.

There is little likelihood that America will fail for lack of business ability. The danger is that we shall fail at the point of character; that we shall fail where failure is fatal to every other kind of success. This is the crucial point.

We do well to perfect the plans by which we teach men the encyclopedia of their bodies, their country, the world and its history. But we cannot forget, and recent events have reminded us with a terrible note of warning, that no amount of knowledge constitutes any sort, even the feeblest kind, of guarantee as to rectitude of life.

If you neglect the heart, the will, and conscience, if you neglect the knowledge of and training in right relations with men, reverence and right relations to the most high, your culture of the intellect is worse than waste; it is the perfecting of the poison of our social life; it is the whetting of the edge of a man's villainy and grossness.

Above all other things, the most desirable is that men shall love truth and hate a lie; that they shall love honour and truth so much more than fame, power, or possessions that never for an instant will these weigh in the scale against the former. But for long it has been thought that this choice flower of nobility grew by chance; the culture of the soul was so mysterious as never to be brought under scientific law.

If a man grew up to be good it was due either to accident or to miracle. The realm of character has been the last to come under the reign of law. Now we recognize that we must learn to live as truly as we must learn to read, and that the culture of the soul must profit by the wondrous strides that all educational science has made; that all our efforts to produce character must be so wisely directed that we shall secure the best and most enduring results.

One message comes from the lips of every seer, from every page of history. It is that the man or the nation alone is wise, alone finds enduring life, who sets before commercial supremacy or political power or fame in learning the glory of righteousness, the beauty of practical holiness. Their wealth lies

beyond corruption and their days know no end who are wise and rich in the things within.

The greatest service we can render our day is by giving it the riches of worthy living, by setting before ourselves the production of high character through all life's processes of learning, and by bringing in every way we may to an age engrossed in selfishness and commercialism the significance of the call of character.

No wonder it sometimes seems to us that we have forgotten to smile; that our faces are so drawn with the tense struggle of life that we have lost sight of the meaning of happiness. How can we be happy unless we shall set our whole lives in harmony with the things that are fundamental and eternal?

We must learn to order our lives, not as machines to be driven at the top of their efficiency in the money mill, but as part of the great life of the spiritual world, as inheritors of things divine, sublime, and glorious, as possessors of the joy that made the morning stars sing together and the beauty that paints the evening red.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The early question of the old creeds, "What is the chief end of man?" was conceived in a spirit more practical than academic. It was the voice of the constant inquiry as to the purpose of living. But the answer given by the creed lacks the assurance of a moral conviction; it fails to find any response in us. "To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever" may be the portion of angels, but honest men have to confess that they have no great desire to be angels, yet.

The emphasis of the creed with that as its basis practically was on dying rather than on living; it owed whatever grip it had on men to the promise it held, to those who were in the midst of the sordid round of tasks or the dull, heavy grind of poverty, of a felicitude that knew neither hunger, fear, nor pain; it offered a heaven forever to those who could endure a hell for a short time.

The logical consequence was to make dying the chief end of living. Who cannot remember being told to despise the present, to consider how brief it is, like a cloud before the dawn of the endless day? It was compared to the short waiting outside some door beyond which was warmth, cheer, and unending bliss. So that the pious soul thought of life only in terms of waiting, watching, enduring. Piety became positive only in prospect, negative in the present.

To say to a man, be patient with wrong and oppression to-day and you will be prospered tomorrow, is to teach him to compound a felony, to wink at the despoiling of the earth by the iniquitous for the consideration of a title to the riches of heaven. It is to lose sight of the fact that unless the life finds itself now it never will find itself, that to dwarf a soul to-day is to dwarf it forever.

"Then," says the practical man, "this means that we can ignore the future; we must make the most of the present; get all you can; keep all you get; the whole purpose of life is to make a good living, to enjoy yourself." This is only the swing of the pendulum away from the old thought. The ideal of the present day is material advantage. The chief end of man is to make money. If once he was the slave of an unjust order, he now is the slave of an unworthy appetite.

Living only for wealth or for wages is not living at all. Who knows less of life than the slave of modern commercialism, the man who lifts his eyes no higher than the pay roll, or the ticker tape? It is better to be the victim of a delusion that gives some happiness, that gives some fortitude, and to live the simple life of the poor than to be the slave bound to the wheel of modern social greed and money madness.

Life itself is the object of living; the chief end of man is to become glorious as his ideal of God is glorious, to realize the highest that comes to him in the song of poet, the vision of seer, the hope of his own heart. The money, the acres, the resources are the tools for the development of life. This world is a workshop; it has failed utterly if it produces nothing but an array of machines and a heap of shavings; it must turn out the finished product of men.

Are you living thus for life, or are you living to do no more than make a living? We need to educate our children to set honour, truth, justice, a high life, before all things, to prize noble attainments so that they shall not be content with the lesser prizes of prosperity in things, so that whether we win or lose in the markets of the world we shall stand rich and glorious in manhood, finding the ends of life in the achievement of high character and finding in commerce but the servant of character.

## THE PRICE OF PERFECTION



Gold may depreciate, stocks rise or fall, and business values change so as to leave the market in panic, but every man on the street or in the store knows that one value forever remains permanent, unvarying, and that is character. Every other asset may be swept away and success still achieved if this remain; every other aid may be at its best and failure only await him who lacks the wealth of character.

Character is that of which reputation is but the echo, often mistaken and misleading. Character is the last, the ultimate, value of life. It is the trend of the whole being towards the best. It is the passion and power that holds one true despite all persuasion.

It is the one thing worth having, because upon it all other values depend. The wealth of the whole world still leaves poor him from whom the soul, the power to appreciate, the purity of heart which sees God and the good, the peace and quietness of a good conscience, have fled. When we turn away from our fighting for fame and our grinding for gold long enough to think, then we know that the things within determine wholly the value and reality of all things without.

The wise ever have set this treasure above all others. Happy the people that love righteousness more than revenue, the way of virtue, the clear eye, the upward look, and the approval of a good conscience above all other prosperity or advantage. The days of national greatness ever have been those when the things that make manhood bulked far above all other considerations. Alike to people and individuals, the imperishable value ever has been that of character.

This asset comes not to a man by accident. He who is rich in character, whose success in many ways is built upon his resources in this way, does not just simply happen to be good, true, and square. There is a price to character; it costs more than any other thing, for it is worth more than all other things. Essentially it never is inherited, but always acquired by processes often slow and toilsome and at great price.

If you would be perfect you must pay the price of perfection. Unless the passion of life is this perfection it never will be your possession. Dreams of ideal goodness only waste the hours in which it might have been achieved. No man ever finds character in his sleep. The education of the heart is a thing even more definite than the education of the head. The school of character has an infinite variety of courses and an unending curriculum.

Folks who are sighing for goodness usually go away sorrowful when they learn what it costs. But life ever is putting to us just such tests as the wise teacher put to the rich young man. You say you desire character, the perfection of manhood or womanhood above all other things; do you desire this enough to pay for it your ease, your coveted fame, your cherished gold, perhaps your present good name and peace of mind? Is the search for character a passion or only a pastime?

This does not mean that this prize of eternity falls only to those who devote themselves wholly to self-culture, to the salvation of their own souls. The best lives have thought little of themselves, but they have lived for the ends of the soul, to help men to better living, to save them from the things that blight and damn the soul. Like the Leader of men they have found the life unending by laying down their lives, paying the full price, selling all in order that right and truth and honour and purity, love and kindness and justice might remain to man.

The world's wealth depends not on what we have in our hands, nor even on what we can carry in our heads. It depends on the things that we have and the beings we are in our hearts. Fools we are who live only to make a living, houses, shelter, food, rags, and toys, who might live to make a life, and to mold lives, to earn the riches and honour enduring; who have not learned the gain of all loss that leads the heart to look up, the joy of all sorrow that sweetens the soul, and the profit from every sacrifice that is a paying of the price of perfection.

## VI

The Age-Long Miracle

*The Sufficient Sign Behold the Man The Life that Lifts*

*Silent goodness speaks loudest.*

*Our loads lift us up to strength.*

*Life grows as love is given.*

*From the grind of drudgery comes at last the glorious divine spark.*

*The spirit of the father never works separation in the family.*

*That day best fulfills its purpose which is a preparation for the next.*

*The proof of a faith is not in its prestige, but in its present power.*

*Things divine are not defended by dodging.*

*It is the heart that gives ease to any work.*

*The door of truth never opens to the key of prejudice.*

*Love never knows how much it gives nor what it costs.*

## **VI**

### **THE SUFFICIENT SIGN**

The scribe and the Pharisee are still with us. "Establish the credibility of the miracles of Jesus, or, better still, let Him work a miracle to-day, and we will believe," they say. This age is credulous; it hungers to believe the extraordinary. Yet, while it is running after folly, it is blind to the most extraordinary fact, the most stupendous miracle that ever took place, although it goes on right before its eyes and is open to every kind of proof. It cannot see the miracle of Jesus in the world to-day, the miracle beside which all the works He did in His lifetime sink into insignificance.

Here is the sign to-day offered to the skeptic: Once, nearly twenty centuries ago, a young preacher travelled and taught through the villages and by the wayside in an obscure oriental country. He addressed a subject race, insular in their prejudices, lacking in political genius and in artistic culture. He lived in days calculated to chill the most fervid religious enthusiasm. He was at first ignored and then hated by His own people; the religious leaders became His implacable foes. His work ended in apparent failure, in a death of shame.

But that was not the end. It is strange that the world remembers anything about that young preacher; but stranger still is the fact that to-day He influences more than half the population of the globe, surpassing all other teachers, more people are under His sway now than the whole world held when He lived. These millions make Him the object of their worship and devotion; in His name they gather regularly all over the world, without regard to language or race.

More than this, this one whom the wise men of His day ignored has been the inspiration of the works of genius and art, of the deeds of heroism, of the lofty endeavours of the world since He died. He has changed the mind. He has changed the appearance of the world; by Him nations have fallen and risen. The humble, the despised, the rejected has become the world's hero, the mightiest of all the sons of men, the saviour of His race.

Once He touched a few who were blind and lame and they were healed; to-day in His name, in every city, a thousand suffering ones are made whole. Science does the work; but the opportunity for its development and the inspiration for its application came from Him.

Nor is this all. He made the world to see; He touched the blind eyes of the people, as they groped in superstition, and has given them sight; He has made the ages, once limping and halting, to arise and march forward with magnificent tread; He found the world a babel of jarring voices and fretting purposes, and His touch gave peace and singleness of purpose until men could discern that "through the ages one unceasing purpose runs." He did for man and mind what was first done for matter, brought the cosmos out of chaos. This is the miracle indeed.

It goes right on before our eyes. They take His name to a dead people, and soon there is life there. Light, and love, and larger life spring up everywhere in His name. From this modern miracle of the power, the growing authority, the kingship of the once despised Jesus we cannot escape; we are perforce participants in its benefits; it conditions all our lives.

If all the gospel stories could be proved myths and the miracles but inventions, there would still remain the greater, the insuperable miracle of the world's picture of the perfect and all glorious personality of Jesus and the fact of His preëminent power in the world to-day. This is the sign He gives this age, and to this the open mind answers: "Thou art the Christ, the saviour of the world."

## BEHOLD THE MAN

The two words, "Ecce homo," contemptuously spoken by the cynical Roman governor contained the highest tribute that had been given to Jesus. How empty appear all the high sounding titles, such as king and emperor, beside this significant one of Man. How sad and self-damning the bitter railing of His enemies in the light of that serene dignity. How puerile the bickering over words and ways of worship, and all the wrangling that blinded them to the heavenly radiance of that all glorious manhood. The wonder of Jesus is not in the deeds He did, but in the being He was. And the wonder of His being is not in that it offers elements for arguments as to a divine personality, but it is that of a simple, clear, sublimely perfect manhood. It is upon this perfection of personal character that His abiding claim to divinity must rest; it depends not on His birth but on His being.

There is something strange about the perversity with which the church has emphasized the least attractive aspects of its master's person. The preachers have scolded men for not coming to church, and when they did come they offered them pictures of an emaciated, effeminate being for their adoration. With them the painters have conspired to set on canvas and in church window representations from the reality of which we would turn with repulsion or on which we would look with pity.

If Jesus is to be the leader of men He must go before them. He must stand in the front, not set there by artificial arguments as to His right to rule over men, but there because He belongs there, first because He is first in all that makes manhood; He is king because He can, and because He has overcome in life's great conflict.

If He is to show us the way we should go He must walk in that way; He must be flesh of our flesh, true man, knowing the full fellowship of our lives. If He was born with a halo; if He lived on angel's fare; if somehow He belongs to another world and His perfections are not those of our nature, then, almighty as He may be as a leader for beings of another world, He has no value to us.

But men have ever set aside the weavings of minds so absorbed in the wonder of their speculations that they could not see the truth. They have seen through the dreamings of poets, painters, and preachers, who pictured only their sickly ideals. And, instead of their caricatures, men have held in their hearts a man, one of their own. And this true fellow, brother and friend, has spurred them to noble deeds and lofty living.

Perfection is seen in strength, not in weakness, in virility and not in tears, in majesty, the majesty truly of meekness, but not of a maudlin, mooning etherealism. The revelation of the perfect man cannot come in a form that a child will pity; it will be admirable from all points of view. It is the heroic rather than the esthetic we must admire.

The men who followed that one long ago did so not because they had heard arguments as to His divine claims, but because they were drawn by the heavenly power of His manhood. This it is that wins men ever, the magnetism of manhood. The force of a great life is mightier than any of the things it does. There is about this leader, Jesus, that which compels us to greatness, spurs us to strife for our better selves, strengthens to sacrifice and to service for our fellows.

It matters little whence a life like this has come; the greater question is where does it lead us. Childish minds spend time on the genealogical trees of the giants; the wise men follow them. The value of the life of the great Teacher does not depend on our ability to comprehend it biologically or arrange it chronologically, but on our vision of its moral and manly perfections and on the power these attributes have over our lives.

This world will be little helped by the most irrefutable syllogism concerning the peculiar nature and separate exclusive divinity of its great religious Teacher. But lives will be lifted everywhere in the measure that they see the man in Him who taught us of God. For men need not so much a God who has come down as a man who has attained to God, not a descent, but an ascent, one who is the life and the truth because He is the way which they may tread up to the glory that is their heritage and the God who is their own.

## THE LIFE THAT LIFTS

To any save the few in the group of His friends that statement of Jesus that being lifted up He would draw all men to Him must have sounded like the ravings of one deluded. It has taken the centuries to show that He was right. He was right in His estimation of His life's end; it was a lifting up. His enemies thought it a casting down, a defeat; He knew it to be a triumph. Sorrow, injustice, oppression, hatred,

the things that seem to crush are the things that elevate. Only by opposition has any life discovered power. The fiercer blow these winds the firmer grows the tree. Out of the petty persecutions, the countless meannesses, the littleness of those who oppose him the great soul builds its greatness. It is, and ever has been by a cross that men are lifted up. History abounds with prisons, gibbets, and crosses which have become thrones of eternal glory.

Whether we shall be cast down or lifted up depends upon ourselves; neither enemies nor adverse circumstances have the power to do this. The soul that seeks the stars builds its staircase out of the stones flung by the persecutor, out of the rocks of difficulties. If your heart is great, my brother, nothing can keep you from greatness; if it is mean, no amount of o'ervaulting ambition can make you other than a little, obscure man, as truly lost on the peak as you would be at the base.

Jesus died a failure; His friends were few, and the best of them thought His life a mistake. It takes more than the span of our lives to measure their size. It is better that a great soul should be called a failure than that it should die a shrivelled success. Earth measures by what the hands hold; heaven by the heart. The hands at last lose their grasp, but the heart wealth goes on from more to more. This it is that is worth while.

Jesus was right when He said that He would draw all men to Him. Then it sounded like folly; to-day it demonstrates His divine insight. Lifted up in shame the riches of His life were revealed. After all, the best in us answers to the best; it is love that leads. In the end, goodness, truth, gentleness, sincerity have the greatest attraction for men. Jesus is known and loved by millions who never heard of Nero or of Augustus. Their glory was that of circumstance; His that of character. His life lifts.

This it is that most helps the world; not learning, but a life; not power or position, but simple passion for men; not riches, but wealth of the inner life. You may not found a university or build libraries or hospitals, or even write books or preach sermons. But every one may do the principal thing that Jesus did. That was to live a life amongst men of love for them, of simple kindnesses, of God-seeking aspiration, of white sincerity. The race needs not so much men who will shake it with their power or dazzle it with their learning as it needs men and women who will lift it with the quiet earnestness and sincerity of their lives. Herein is lasting greatness and true power, to live as He lived, to love as He loved, true to God, to yourself, and to your fellows, seeking the best and giving of your best.

Service and sacrifice are the things that lift to the supreme places; the lower you stoop in helpfulness the higher you are lifted in lasting glory. And they are lifted to heaven, they achieve immortality, they can never die who were willing to die if death lay in the path of duty, to be sacrificed if sacrifice was part of their service.

## VII

Seeing the Unseen

*The Sense of the Unseen The Brook in the Way That Which is High*

*The song of sympathy never comes until the singer has been to the school of sorrow.*

*True spirituality can see the altar in the cookstove and the washtub.*

*People who are always off the key are never content out of the choir.*

*The only version of the Bible authorized by heaven is that on two feet.*

*Every life must have days in the desert but it does not need to build its house there.*

*Many a man thinks he is patient with pain when he is only perverse in eating pickles.*

*No man knows how much religion he has until he goes of fishing alone where mosquitoes are many.*

*There are too many people to whom God has given wings who are complaining of corns.*

*It is some consolation to know that when you aim at nothing you are sure to hit it.*

*If you have large reserves of religion you will not be without the small change of kindness.*

## VII

### THE SENSE OF THE UNSEEN

When the practically-minded man Paul writes of looking at the things which are not seen his words sound like either fantasy or folly. Yet it is plain fact, practical, and certainly essential to any success. He is blind who can see only with his eyes, and he only is sensible who knows there are many things beyond his senses. Practical men consider all the factors to every problem, and things are not less real to them because they may chance to be intangible.

The unseen things are imminent to us always. There are many things not yet pigeonholed by our science nor catalogued by our philosophies. You can dissect a daisy and enumerate its parts; but you never know a daisy until you have seen the unseen things thereof, until you have felt the subtle appeal of its beauty. Bobbie Burns saw more of the daisy than the greatest botanist without his spiritual eyes.

The danger is that in our hard workaday we shall forget the reality of the unseen, we shall get to think that gold and steel and land are the only real things, and we shall shape ourselves by the blind and base creed of gold, and steel, and land. How easy it is to measure every man by his possessions in tangible things. How easy to make these our chief end in life, to slight the real prizes, the unseen wealth that lies so close at hand or already possessed, while we rush and strive for the rainbow of riches.

Deep within us we know that he is rich, and he alone, who has wisdom, love, patience, who possesses friends, who creates kindly thoughts, whose life with simple joy abounds. Once again and often do we need to see Bunyan's picture of the man bending over his refuse, gathered with the muck rake, and heedless of the angel holding the crown that only waits his taking.

A man is wealthy according to what is within him. His greatness is of the things that are unseen. There are limits to the possession and the use of the things that are seen; but who shall set a limit to a man's possible wealth in love and honour, in wisdom and integrity, in all the things that make up the soul of man? Few are the things that a man may hold for his own all the days of his life, and fewer still are those he may grasp with pleasure when the hands are falling helpless by his side. But many are the riches he may have to hold forever in the things of the unseen. Many a man walks through the fields penniless and yet richer far than their owner; to him the birds sing, for him the flowers bloom, to his eyes there are beauties in the blue beyond all words, and all the loveliness of the fair land lifts his heart within him. The other man who holds the title deeds sees nothing beside them. Possession is wholly a matter of appreciation. The earth is the Lord's and He gives it to those who have eyes to see.

It is the eye to see the unseen that gives wealth to the seen. Values depend on vision. Appreciation does not prevent possession; it makes the possession actual. And the vision of the realities behind things keeps a man from the sense of destitution when all things are taken from him. He cannot be destitute. He may lose all his fellows, but he cannot be friendless; the Father of Spirits cannot lose him, nor can he be cut off from fellowship with those who die no more.

The seeing eye is the stimulus to the worth while endeavour. The inventors who have enriched the world endured derision seeing the things invisible to others. The truth is that it is the unspiritual world that makes the least progress in things material. The men of faith and vision are back of all advance. They have endurance, patience, and strength. The sense of another world where motives are rightly measured, the sense of a great cloud of worthy witnesses to other eyes invisible, the sense of reward in the very service itself, rewards intangible yet most real, the joy of sacrifice and service; these all enable one to push on, to toil, to endure. Then, long afterwards, the dull, weary world sees and understands.

### THE BROOK IN THE WAY

Alongside every highway runs the brook whereof a man may drink often if he will and drinking lift up his head. Its little song we scarce hear in the rush of our businesses; its refreshing we forget even though our throats be parched with the dust of our petty affairs. Yet it is ever there, cool, refreshing, this world of spirits and ideals.

Nature has a prodigal way of scattering rivulets down the hillside and along the pathways, little heeding whether men walk there or not. The practical eye sees waste; these streams might have been made to turn wheels; the needs of the traveller, weary with the way, might be met by faucets at regular intervals.

It is well for us all that the power of the practical man finds its limitations, else all poetry would have

gone from the world, and great and glorious as might have been our physical perfections our bodies would be but the empty habitations whence souls had long since fled. The utilitarian would have stolen from us the bliss of the deep draft from the pebbly brook.

The man who is proud of being practical tells us we are wasting time and nervous energy in stopping to think of ideal things; we must take the world as we find it, he says, forgetting how fair and poetic we once found it and how bleak and ugly we are likely to leave it. But to him trees are always lumber, grass and flowers but hay, bird songs spell poultry, wind and waters energy. Many are too busy making things ever to enjoy anything that is made.

In this steel age it may seem folly and waste to stop and think of sacrifice and courage and love, to admire and answer to the thrill of human passions; but alas for him who never sees the light of heaven in another's tear, nor hears the brush of angels' wings when men and women fly to their fellow's aid.

If you haven't time in your busy life to turn aside to drink of the brook of human affection, to look deep into the eyes of friendship, to sympathize, to comfort, to taste this strange sweet and bitter cup of our common fellowship, then is your heart going dry and thirsty and life becoming a whitened road that knows no wells or springs.

But something there is in man that calls for drafts at yet deeper streams than these. Foolish and unlearned he may be, ignorant of the wise conclusions of philosophers who have looked into these things with their lanterns, but through the ages he has been drinking eagerly at the waters of eternity. In every man there is a thirst after the deep, immeasurable things divine; the deeper the nature of the man the greater his necessity for drinking often here.

The consciousness of the great life that embraces all life, the sense of its nearness to us all, has been a perennial refreshing to all great hearts. In some way to bring the life into touch with the infinite is to take down its limitations, break its barriers, and give it a sense of infinitude, to lift up the head in vision of the divinity of our lives and of every life. We who walk in the dust often need to be filled with the divine lest we become ourselves but dust.

This world of things is hungry for the life that is more than things, the life of the spirit; that is why so many love to sing of heaven and dream of a fair world peopled by strange and glorious celestial ones. Heaven is nearer than we think; like the brook by the way, the life of the spirit flows beside this life; happy they who drink of its waters, who already enter into eternity, who find strength for this life's way and work by the contact with the life that is life indeed.

Is it any wonder that life is a wearisome thing, a dead drag, when you are starving its very sources? You neglect the soul at the peril of all. So anxious are you to run this race that you have no time to allow him who rides in the chariot to drink of the water of life. This is not utilitarianism; this is suicide from the centre out.

The most practical common sense demands that you feed the inner places of your life, the heart that has gone so long thirsty and longing for love, for things too deep for words, for things that cannot be used and cannot be quoted in dollars. Give your inner life its deep drafts of the infinite life and your outer life shall take its place and do its work in the world.

## THAT WHICH IS HIGH

There are two ways of viewing the oncoming years, as burdens or as opportunities, with fear or with expectation. The days of the new year may loom up as a series of unwelcome tasks to be unwillingly done or as so many invitations to attempt and achieve great things. The difference between these two points of view marks the difference between enduring life and finding the life that endures.

The wise preacher of long ago caught sight of one of these distinctions that cut clear through to the roots of things. He says that the sign of old age is that a man is "afraid of that which is high." When courage and ambition have gone old age and decrepitude have entered in, no matter whether a man be eighteen or eighty.

He alone has youth, he alone has life before him, who can still catch the vision of the ideal, of that which is high, who can lift up his eyes beyond the horizon of practicabilities and precedents and see the things not yet realized. There is a time when men must dream dreams and see visions, when they must feast on noble purposes or die so far as the inner spirit and all that makes real living is concerned.

If you find the will becoming dull and listless, with no quickening of the pulses, but only apathy or a sneer for the high purpose or the great promise, it is but a sign of the approach of senility, of the failure

of the powers. When the ambition can be satisfied with the less while the greater is before it, when things low and base are preferred to things high, afar off, and difficult to attain, the heart is dying already.

Cherish as the spark of life the aspiration to have and do and be the best. Yet who is there does not know the paralyzing chill that the sneer of the philistine or even the memory of our own many failures can give when great possibilities offer themselves to us? How easily enter in the cold considerations that deaden our aspirations; how subtle the temptation to be content with the condition that involves neither toil nor pain. How hard to realize that this is an invitation to death.

To all men comes the thrill of the passion to do some great thing, to give to our world some worthy service. To yield to this is to keep the heart young, is to defy time, to conquer the years. Whether the coming days shall bend the back with their burdens or shall nerve and strengthen the life does not depend on whether they have cares or joys in them, but on whether they find us responsive to the call of noble things.

No man can afford to let a pure and lofty impulse die, nor, for fear of failure or of ridicule, to become afraid or ashamed of his ideals. Living is more than a dull feeding at tables or troughs, more than shelter and sleep; it is growing, climbing, becoming, finding higher levels and seeing yet higher before.

Nor is this all; the spirit of greatness finds ample play in daily duties. The success of the year does not depend on whether you can do things that shall amaze men to-day or make your name known forever, but upon whether into all the things you do, lowly, humdrum, commonplace as they may seem to be, the daily duties of home or shop or store, the care of the baby, or the running of a typewriter, there shall enter the great and high motive.

This is what we all need, the high vision of the lowly things, the sight of the fact that the least piece of work is an essential part of the service of the whole universe, that a man serves the Divine not by wearing a black coat but by doing, as in God's name, with high motives the least duties that may be his. It is not place nor authority nor wage that makes the work high or low; it is the spirit of the service and the part it plays in the world's great business of perfecting humanity.

Would you ward off old age, cherish vitality and give value to your days, seek the things that are above, the life that serves some worthy end. One is young as long as his heart leaps responsive to a noble call. But he who lives to pleasure, to the satisfaction of self, who has shut his eyes to the high things that call for self-denial, for toil and loss, is dead already.

## VIII

### Sources of Strength and Inspiration

*Strength for the Daily Task The Sense of the Infinite The Great Inspiration*

*Living heartily is one secret of living happily.*

*Life is early blighted if it knows no clouds.*

*You can tell the character of any age by the place it gives to character.*

*There is little danger in the discontent with conditions that is equalled by discontent with character.*

*Heart health never comes so long as the hand is kept on the pulse.*

*Feed on garbage and you soon lose faith in good things.*

*The fruitful life seeks showers as well as sunshine.*

*It's hard for a man who has ground of his nose on the money mill to smell a taint on anything.*

*Many a man goes back by trying to put up a good front and nothing more.*

*Every life is worth the love it gives.*

## VIII

### STRENGTH FOR THE DAILY TASK

It is the dull grind and monotony of life that makes it so hard to bear for the ninety-nine per cent. of us. Sometimes it seems as though we spend all our days toiling, wearing strength, and hope, and heart away for no other end than to gain just bread and shelter so as to keep the machine in condition for further toil.

How hopeless is the outlook of many a life! The mother with the weary round of home duties day after day, the father who goes to the same task year after year, seeing the same people, doing the same things, and coming home at the day's end with the same weariness, only augmented as age makes itself felt—all who toil feel at times these depressing limitations.

Little wonder that lives snatch at every fleeting, alluring promise of relief, through amusement, through anything that offers change and excitement. Little wonder that, robbed of opportunity for vision, they foment blind discontent, so that we all feel there is a mighty substratum of wretchedness and of menace lying under our social order.

Yet there are few lives, perhaps no worthy ones, without tasks that often seem monotonous and become matters of dull grinding that bring weariness and longing for relief. All worth while work involves much tediousness, painstaking exertion. All great things stand for so much life poured out, and life is never poured out without pain and loss.

The stern Puritan was doubtless wrong when he saw nothing in life but repression and stern duty, but he was nearer right than he who looks only for frivolity and amusement. Life is too large a business to be always light and trivial. Yet we must not allow its high purposes to be thwarted by robbing ourselves and our fellows of all joy and brightness and converting life into dull, mechanical servitude.

How may we find that proportion of toil and relief, that happy mixture of duty and delight that shall make life not only endurable but also useful, fruitful, and enjoyable? For it is man's duty to be happy; otherwise he can never be useful in any high or valuable sense.

It would be easy to try to give comfort by the philosophy which sees the fine fruitage that is coming from to-day's stern discipline. That fair fruitage is coming, but the trouble is it is too far off to give us much comfort now; we want something nearer and more easily apprehended. Then, too, the truth is no high fruitage will ever issue from a life crushed by slavish subjection.

After all, what life is to every one of us depends not on the demands of outer circumstances, but on the development of the life within. The heart determines the worth and beauty of life. It makes all the difference whether the physical determines its circumference or whether you have an intellect that is reaching out to the things unmeasurable and a soul that grows into glory indescribable.

You can tie a great soul down hand and brain to a loom or a machine and he will still see his visions and dream his deep, refreshing dreams; you can set the brutish being down in a gallery of the world's treasures of art and beauty and he will think of nothing and see nothing but bread and beer.

We must do our dull and heavy tasks, but we can do them and not be crushed by them so long as within there are fragrant memories, high aspirations, great thoughts; so long as the task does not set the boundary of the life. And it is the cherishing of these eternal riches within that lifts any life and makes it worthy of higher tasks.

We need to seek out the springs of noble thoughts, to find in the riches of the world's literature, in music, and in beauty of art the food for that inner life in the strength of which, drawing often on its secret resources, we can go many days through the desert of toil.

The wise life uses every opportunity of refreshing; it drinks of every spring of the up-welling waters of life; it seeks communion with every great soul. Holidays and rest days are to it times of replenishing when the eyes that ache from bending over the machine or desk lift themselves to the eternal hills and the heart turns to the things that are infinite.

### THE SENSE OF THE INFINITE

One does not have to believe in the same kind of a god as did the seers and singers of long ago in order to obtain the spiritual values which they found in the thought of his nearness to them. David and Browning, Isaiah and Whittier, with all the centuries between them, still come to the same thought—we



know that Thou art near.

Through all ages and in all peoples this sense of that which is other than ourselves, from which our highest good comes, towards which our ideals and aspirations strain, the ultimate force of our being, this feeling after the infinite is universal. It is the essential and determinative mark of every religion.

When those singers of long ago tried to express their sense of the infinite life and love they used words which make it appear that they thought only of some being larger, mightier, wiser than themselves, yet, after all, like themselves, a great man deified because He was great. Perhaps that really was their conception; still, we use precisely the same language, even though our ideas are entirely different.

It makes relatively little difference what their conceptions were, so far as ours are concerned. Their words are not accurate, detailed pen pictures of some being who can be described or photographed. No man has seen the infinite at any time. The great thing is that ever and everywhere men find themselves with a hunger after this sublime unseen.

One may use terms of personality and another terms of power; to one the infinite may be but a local deity; to another, that which embraces all spirit and being, and each may have all of the divine his heart is capable of containing. Here none may dogmatize for others.

Religion does not depend on uniformity of conceptions of the divine. It depends more upon universality of consciousness of the infinite and openness of mind and life to whatever we may feel and know, from any source or through any means whatsoever, of that life or energy which lies back of all life and energy, of that love and light which cheer and lighten every son of man.

Definitions determine nothing, but they do work great damage when minds capable of being stereotyped to them agree to impose those definitions on their fellows as final, authoritative, and essential to their welfare. The divine is neither infinite nor sublime when you can say, Here are His lineaments and He has no other likeness or appearance.

To the question, How shall we think of the divine? there can be but one answer—in higher, wider, deeper, nobler, purer ways than yesterday. The conception must be a developing one. A man's spiritual capacities develop as his inner vision becomes more keen. The soul takes wider flight, and in our deep thoughts we discover that which language cannot compass.

There are those who think they must be atheists because they cannot believe in the God of the Hebrews, the God of the Old Testament—a limited personality. But the genuine atheists are more likely to be those who are without a sense of the divine, because they have taken definitions and descriptions prepared by others instead of seeking truth for themselves.

We are but poor learners of those ancient teachers if we have not discovered that their greatest lesson to us is not truth, as they had found it, but the blessing of the persistent search after truth. To cherish as final past presentations of truth is to be false to its present possibilities.

We do not need to worry over definitions of the divine. We do need to cultivate the temper of mind and the sensitiveness of spirit that will save us from blindness to the higher facts of life, that will save us from the blasting whirlwind of materialism, with its sense of nothing but a soulless world of things.

We need to avoid the mind that shuts the divine up in some far off heaven to be reached only by formal telephony called prayer; that fails to see the infinite in all things—in sunlight and flower, in children's laughter, and in misery's wail, in factories and stores, as well as in churches. We need the mind that argues not about omnipresence, but in duty and delight cries, Always and everywhere, Thou art near.

## **THE GREAT INSPIRATION**

Christianity is distinguished and dominated by the ideal of the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth; it is a philosophy and a system of individual and social ethics under the inspiration of a glowing ideal. No matter how greatly its people may differ on other points, all are agreed in recognizing in Jesus the fairest of the sons of men.

There never was a time when the thought of this life was more potent than it is to-day. Men think of Him as a fellow being, one who went about doing good, who looked out on life with the windows of His soul unsullied and who lived out ever the holiest and highest that came to Him.

The thought of such a one has become so real to men that they do not stop to argue about His existence, as once they did. If it was possible indisputably to disprove the historic Christ men still

would cherish, as highly as ever, the ideal, the vision of such a life, and in their hearts would know that such a picture could only have been born of such a person.

This goodly, glorious man no longer is one who now sits on the throne of heaven. Men are not particularly concerned as to whether He is artistically glorified and perpetuated by some divine decree. He has crowned Himself in the glory of a pure and beneficent character; He has perpetuated Himself in human loves and admiration.

Because He once showed Himself as the friend of all, the pure, high souled friend of the down-trodden and the outcast, the strong, invigorating friend of the rich and successful, He to-day walks by many a man as His unseen friend, and in busy mart or office men feel the presence of a heavenly guest.

Once men made that life the centre of dispute; they sought to prove His divinity by His unlikeness to ordinary humanity. But the facts defeated them. This man whom men so learned to love that they became willing to die for Him was in all respects a man. His life is worth so much to us because He was so much like us.

It has come as a new revelation to the world that the supreme religious soul of the ages should be so tenderly, naturally human. We cry "Father!" with a new sense of relationship and fellowship when we see the likeness of the father in the face of such a son.

We are coming to believe that just what the great friend of mankind was so is the great father of us all to us all, that just as the Son of the most high moved amongst men seeking to help, cheering, comforting, loving, so is the eternal spirit moving in our world, going about doing good.

Once every effort of the theologian was bent to setting this majestic figure apart from mankind to secure Him sovereignty over us by separation from us. How different is that from the simple pictures drawn of Him, from the naturalness of His life, from the love which He had for homes and human friendships, from the life which earned the illuminating rebuke of being called a friend of sinners.

It is a good thing for us all often to remember that there has been such a life, that one born in poverty and unknown, far removed from centres of culture and wealth, living the hard life of a peasant, knowing all our temptations and weaknesses, yet should open His life so fully and completely to spiritual influences as to become to all the ages the greatest of all spiritual leaders.

What one has done another may do. What He has been we may be. He but shows the possibility of any life. He had no advantage over us; we know no disadvantages against which He did not have to strive. The divine heights have been scaled by human feet; His footprints beckon us on.

## IX

### Finding Foundations

*The Passing and Permanent Facing the Facts The Real Foundation*

*Things not right can never be religious.*

*Bigotry puts blinders on the best of men.*

*Submission is the first step to sovereignty.*

*The principle of expediency expels all other principle.*

*Quiet lives are often eloquent.*

*The love of wealth steals wealth of love.*

*It's the common virtues that make uncommon saints.*

*Many a man is shouting his convictions to drown the voice of conscience.*

*A little learning is dangerous if you are planning to get to heaven by degrees.*

*When a man gets over anxious about the gnat it's time to hang on to the camel.*

## IX

### THE PASSING AND PERMANENT

When the walls are being rebuilt it is easy to imagine that the foundations are being destroyed. Old creeds pass away, but truth remains; if they were true in their day they do but give place to the larger truth of the new day. We need to distinguish between the turmoil attendant to the process of building and the beauty of the new temple that arises.

The old folks hear the new truths and ask, where are the foundations gone? The young hear the discussion between the old and the new and ask, is there anything settled, anything worth believing? What are the permanent elements in religion on which the life may build while the things that are but temporary are adjusting themselves?

It would be the height of folly to assert that there is no change. Some say that we must believe precisely the same things as our fathers believed. To do so would be to be false to our fathers, for they refused to accept the traditions of their elders. The landmarks we leave behind once were far in front of the seekers after truth.

Truth never changes but our vision is ever enlarging. The road remains, but the traveller moves on. With the living every day has some new light. Creeds are crystallized statements of truth; truth is vital and cannot be contained in unchanging forms. Credulity blindly accepts yesterday's picture of truth; faith, with open eyes, seeks to-day's truth itself.

Skepticism is much less sinful than credulity. The sloth of the man who will not examine things, will not prove them, who prefers to buy his garments of truth ready made, results in what is worse than unbelief, and that is blind belief in the false. It is a religious duty to question every teaching, to prove all things.

How may we find those things that are certain? How may we discover the truth for our day, the truth upon which we may build? Surely there are some things fixed and certain, there is somewhere pole star and compass. How may we find that truth which belongs to our day and in which we may have the confidence that our fathers had in their truth?

The test of the vital truths is a practical one. Only those truths are vital which concern the present business of living in all its wide sweep.

It is a matter of indifference what we may think of the colour of angels' hair or the number of strings to their harps; it is a vastly different matter what we may believe as to moral obligations, human rights, and duties.

The test of creed is an ethical one. What things work out best in living, what are the ideals, doctrines, beliefs that make the noblest characters and the most useful citizens, the best sons, and daughters, and parents, and neighbours? What are the things that help me most in my life, the things that give me moral stimulus and bracing, the things that lead me to covet the best?

The way to find the truth is to do the truth; only the truth that we can do is worth discussing. If you will give yourself to the business of living the truth you have you soon will have the living truth for this new day.

Too many people are holding up as saving doctrines matters of philosophy and speculation, matters of childish curiosity, because it is easier to hold these things theoretically than to hold living truth practically. The truths that save men are the ones that change their characters; the great authorized and divine translation of the Bible is its translation into present day lofty living.

Build your life on the belief in goodness, in eternal, infinite goodness as the order of the universe, on the superiority of love to hatred, on the final victory of love and goodness, on the ideal of this great human family of ours that shall come to live in unity and brotherliness, and so fulfill the will of the infinite father of all. These things work well.

### FACING THE FACTS

This is the age of the dominance of science. When a man asks, What shall I believe? only one answer can be returned: Believe the things that are. An age now past found it easy to believe that it believed what it was told, even the things that it knew were not so. But to-day at least has the merit of finding no merit in that form of self-deception.

The passion for absolute truth and rightness is one of the noblest that can spring up in any breast; it is a ripe fruit of religion. The scientist, by his devotion to exact facts, to pure truth, is the religious man of our day, and the schools become religious educators in their power to instill a primary love for truth and to lift up ideals of exactness and equity.

When we translate religion into terms of life, into actuality as contrasted with imagination, we begin to discover the necessity for foundations deeper than legend or romance. So long as a man's religion consisted in what he might picture in glowing colours of imagination on the canvas of fancy about his past or future he did not need to take his designs from facts.

But when religion becomes the science of right living, the process of securing right social relationships and character as the expression of ideal personal and individual character, it is evident that in such a work religion must proceed on ascertained, indisputable verities.

We may be satisfied with myths as to the ordering of the first family, and we may leave to the play of fancy the specifications of an ideal heaven; but when we begin to order our own families and adjust our social and civic affairs we are compelled to wait for principles based on facts, for truth. Religion thus becomes a science.

Much eloquence was spilled over the conflict between religion and science. It was only a conflict between the old religion and its new form, between the gray dawn and the growing day. Our fathers were not wilfully false, holding on to darkness when the light came; but they so long had held sacred the pictures seen in twilight they were loath to give them up for those of the full day's printing.

The most damaging infidelity is the lack of faith in truth, the fear that it might not be safe to allow all the facts to be known. He who in the name of religion seeks to prevent our seeing and accepting the full facts is religion's greatest foe. Only the full truth can set us fully free, intellectually, spiritually, morally.

Why should we fear the light of investigation on the things of religion? There is more sacredness in simple truth than in secrecy. It were better to be lost forever seeking truth than saved by sophistry. How foolish to attempt to adjust our lives by laws built out of speculation, to attempt to steer by a compass when there is no pole of truth?

In to-day's changing tides of thought, when the old faiths seem slipping away, when we wonder why we have lost the simple faith of our own youth or our father's, looking for some firm ground for our feet, we do well to set them down on nothing but facts, to discriminate among the sands of time and the alluvial deposits of tradition till we find the rock of truth.

But facing the facts we find everywhere one writ large, over all one great principle of unchanging law, one great purpose moving through all nature and all history, and what we once only dared to hope and dream, that back of all there throbs infinite love and there rules infinite wisdom, now is attested by the impressive array of the witnesses of science.

Truth always is safe. The holiest error must be born of hell. We can make no mistake in refusing to go beyond truth, and we will find that she leads to the ordering of life according to eternal laws, to the doing of duties and finding of sweet joys as old as the hills and as unchanging; she will lead in the paths of rightness.

Some day our race will know all the alphabet of nature and be able to read the story of the unchanging goodness; some day we shall comprehend the wavering handwriting of history; some day we shall catch the harmony of love and law; we shall know the full truth that is religion; shall know things as they are and be what we should be.

## THE REAL FOUNDATION

A good many thousand sermons have been preached on the parable of the houses built on sand and on rock, probably nearly all of them with the intent to prove that the way to build the life on a rock foundation is to pass through the experience known as conversion, obtain saving faith and join the church. This is typical of a popular way of interpreting the scriptures: First, determine what you wish them to mean and then make them mean that. The purpose being to persuade people to join the church, then by hook or crook that duty must be discovered in every divine precept.

But this is simply to ignore the plain words of the great Teacher. It would be impossible to clarify His statement: "If any man hears and does the things I have been teaching he is like one who builds on a rock." One thing marks the rock founded life, the doing of Christly deeds. The course of conduct, the

kind of character He has just outlined in the sermon on the mount gives the established staple character.

The enduring life is not built on dreams. Many people think that their lives are rock founded because they have a nebulous admiration for the moral teachings of Jesus. On the whole they admire the sermon on the mount; having taken the trouble to say as much as this they sit back with the comfortable feeling that they have set themselves right with the universe, that the Almighty will be delighted with their indorsement.

One of the most dangerous hypocrites is the easy-going, thoughtless being who fancies that the indorsement of a duty is equivalent to the doing of it. He evaporates his convictions into compliments instead of crystallizing them into conduct. So far from being built on a rock he floats around like a wisp of hay in a high wind. A butterfly might better hope to drill and quarry out a foundation than he. Besides this, his hypocritical praise of right precepts makes them only offensive to those who might desire to practice them.

Others imagine that an intellectual assent to certain statements concerning the church or the Bible or Jesus is sufficient to fix the life in stability. But the great Teacher does not place the emphasis so much on what men may think of His character or mission, nor even on their honest opinions on the theories of the past and the future, which have delighted mental gymnasts since the world was young, to Him the great differentiating fact touches those dynamic convictions that are determining your conduct this day.

He places conduct before creed. He long ago took that method of teaching which modern pedagogy approves. He taught religion by the manual method. Instead of saying, as theologians do, first comprehend these doctrines and then you will be able to do them, He says, first do these things, practice My precepts, and they will ere long become plain to you. Men learn religion by doing. Begin to do the right and you will get the reason; get the rule through the example. Deeds are the solvents of doctrines.

The house of life is built differently from any other; we get the plans by erecting the structure. In the realm of character it is houses rather than architecture we need. Build but one hour's conduct squarely on the plain, cogent teachings of the man of Nazareth and you will serve the world better than if you gave a lifetime to the explanation of His words.

Doctrines are but teachings intended to be done into deeds. Doing them you gain a larger peace of mind and sense of stability of life than in any other way. If you want the equilibrium of faith you will find it by simply laying life's daily details on the plain foundation of His principles. Nothing could be plainer; there are no hair-splitting metaphysics, no subtle questions of policy here; do these things and the heart finds calm, the life certitude, the soul satisfaction.

## **X**

The Passion for Perfection

*The Great Search The Hunger of the Ages The Sole Satisfaction*

*Pain is the parent of power.*

*Marking time leaves no mark on time.*

*The proof of love is loving the unlovely.*

*Truth never is found by twisting the facts.*

*Wings come not to those who refuse to walk.*

*An ideal usually is what we want the other man to be.*

*There is no righteousness without some self-respect.*

*You cannot lead men to the divine by crawling in the dust.*

*The real saints have no time to write their autobiographies.*

*When a man boils over quickly you soon find out what is in him.*

*True piety simply is the prosperity of the eternal things in a man.*

*The world never will be won from the love of evil until we make the good lovely.*

## X

### THE GREAT SEARCH

The cry, "How may I be right?" is the cry of the ages. Human history is the record of our attempt to answer it. Man is naturally a truth seeker, and this is the search of all truly great souls. The enduring monuments of literature are those that have in some measure answered this question. All things that have been worth while have helped us to know and to realize the right. Health, happiness, freedom, morality, all are but parts of the right; all are but sections of the sublime whole for which man ever seeks. The search manifests itself in different ways; it may be as science, the passion for the knowledge of the right relations of things; as justice, for right relations amongst men; as philosophy, as ethics, as religion. Back of all our life is the instinct of progress; we push towards the perfect. And perfection we now know rests not in more things but in bringing all the things that are into right relations with one another.

The idea that any man can be right regardless of others we scout as absurd. The ideal civilization we work for here, even the heaven we long for, is simply a condition of living where the things that separate, despoil, and introduce discord are no more. The hope of the race is to be in right relations with all things. All the great religions are as the footprints of peoples who have sought the truth that would lead them to be right and just with one another, with the world, and with the great unseen powers behind all being. Our universal sense of wrongness is but part of our passion for rightness.

The sense of imperfection and the desire for improvement have marked all religions that have influenced men. In the Jew this desire for righteousness was supreme. Job is but a type. Coming to himself amongst the ruin of all the things he counted most precious, he forgets their loss in his desire to solve the great problem, What is right and how may I reach it? Somewhere he knows there is a solution to all the riddles of his friends and the questions of his own heart. An orderly universe is not crowned by a being whose life must ever remain an unsolved riddle. Men are not adrift in a fog with no hope of taking bearings. If men have marked the natural world with lines of latitude and longitude for the guidance of its travellers, the moral world is not without its markings.

Job's very question contains the only answer that has ever satisfied man. God Himself is the great meridian of all morality. From Him we may measure all relationships and get them right. That is the essential message of the Bible; it strikes that first of all in "In the beginning God—" Every life is right in the measure that it adjusts itself to the unvarying will; amongst the nations they have the kingdom who do His will. The world has made progress in precisely the proportion that this will has been realized. The promise of the present is that this great standard, this universal law by which all may find the right, has been made known to all through a life. One of our own has set forth God. One has lived who has shown us how to live. For every problem there is now an example of its solution. For every difficulty there is something better far than a declaration of duty; there is the great Doer of the deed. He has come near to man that men might come near to one another. He reveals the right.

Yet we must not allow His perfection to make Him unapproachable. He is only an example as long as His example is attainable. His divinity does not depend on His distance from us but on the degree in which He lifts us, inspires us towards the height He has gained.

### THE HUNGER OF THE AGES

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," is the central beatitude; in a measure it embraces all the others, for every virtue they inculcate is included in righteousness. But it is often rejected as impracticable because fanciful teachers who substitute subtle definitions for simple duties have twisted its plain words until righteousness is made something so unreasonable as to be repulsive to a right mind. As a matter of fact, it means no more than rightness; the hunger and thirst for righteousness is but the earnest, supreme desire and endeavour to be right and to do right at all times, the appetite for the right.

Theological righteousness may mean some strange imputed quality laid on a man like a cloak to cover

his real condition or a bill of health given to a sick man. But men who live next to real things care nothing one way or the other for theoretical rightness; they want the real article. And a right man will not be satisfied to have even the Most High think of him as being perfectly right when he knows he falls far short of it. He would rather be the faltering pursuer of actual rightness than the possessor of a hypothetical, ascribed perfection.

The great Teacher cares nothing about imaginary virtues; He praises those who ardently seek the real ones. He knows that in the market of character cash alone is currency; here you cannot draw checks on some other person's deposits. To Him it is better by far to die facing the right than to live in smug content with borrowed merits. This world will never be content with a gospel that offers only vicarious virtues; at its heart it knows too well its need of the genuine usable ones; it has at least the dormant faculties of an appetite for rightness.

And all this world story is but a record of the struggle for rightness. All human progress is but its fruitage. In every age there have been glorious souls who have made this passion a thing that glowed in their lives and became a light to their day. In every man the divine discontent that divides him from the animal is the sign of this desire in some form; it shows man seeking to find more perfect, more nearly right relations with the things about him. As the things about him come to include God and heaven and things unseen so will his search for rightness become wider and deeper and more spiritual. Every form of spiritual aspiration, every religion, no matter how uncouth and strange, is still the soul of man seeking right relations to the infinite.

What a glorious thing is this passion for the right; what visions it has seen, what strength it has given to their realization. It is the great tide that, moving restless and resistless in our bosoms, has carried us on towards God. We cannot but believe it is born of him. It does not originate in him, for it disturbs his peace, it stirs him from sloth, it spurs him to new and often unwelcome endeavours. It ever holds before him the shining possibility of a perfect being in a perfect world.

No wonder Christ used the figure of hunger and thirst. Literal appetites have been the motives back of the world's struggle for physical rightness; yet these cravings have not been more general or more forceful than those of the soul. But for hunger and thirst man would have lived in perfect content with the form and facts of life as he found them; progress, all that we call civilization, would not have been.

Man is happy in proportion as necessity compels him to heed these cravings. So is it in the moral world; the struggle has been our salvation. To cease to strive for rightness is to cease to live. Individually and nationally they are happy who accept the rigorous climate of lofty ethical ideals, who are not content to take life as they find it, but who seek to cultivate flowers and fruits of paradise on the sterile, rocky soil of the human heart. This is the life that Jesus shows, the life that seeks and finds the truth, that with passionate ardour seeks right relations both with His fellows and with His Father. Out of the fullness of experience, in the midst of His own struggle He encourages all who strive; they shall be satisfied. No ideal, no noble passion, no glorious sacrifice, no honest endeavour for the right was ever in vain; the soul finds itself in seeking the supreme good.

## THE SOLE SATISFACTION

Through the ages men have waited for voices to speak from out the great unknown. Answering to this universal longing for larger light, to this search for truth, there has been the conviction that, where our own scanty knowledge ended, there something akin to revelation would give us light. We have been listening for voices that would speak with an authority transcending that given to our fellows.

Cold reason may mock at revelation, but the soul struggling in darkness, baffled by its problems, lost in the night, still looks up and hopes. For what awaits us but despair if the mysteries of the universe are forever sealed, our questions forever unanswered, and no higher appeal to be known than that to our own selfish interests? It is not strange that men have heeded those who, though often mistaken or but impostors, have cried, "Thus saith the Lord!"

It would be strange if in a world of spirits there might be no communication of spirit. If the fairest thought of our era is that which was given us when man was taught to think of the omnipotent as father, it would be strange if there should be no way by which such a father might speak to his children. Such a world would contradict all our best instincts. Such a world would mean that man was better than his maker.

The divine voice speaks, but we too often listen in the wrong direction. It falls not from the skies; it comes not in strange, unusual ways of visions and portents. But it is ever speaking through the things of daily life; it is ever revealing truth and beauty to the inner ear, for it comes not from without but

springs up within; heard by the heart rather than by the ear.

The best things have not dropped down; they have grown up. Life is not from without, but from within. God speaks not in thunders, but in the hopes and the longings of hearts. Even the voice we hear in the sighings of the wind or the message we read in the rays of setting sun must be in us before it means aught to us.

The ten commandments owe their force not to any writing on stone but to their writing on our hearts; to them the soul of man answers affirmatively. The only moral code we can follow is that which speaks with the authority of a conscience convicted. That does not mean that man is his own God, nor that he knows no law higher than himself; it does mean that by the laws of spiritual development the law is being written on every heart.

Every real revelation is a divine revelation, since all truth is divine. Once we thought the scientist the enemy of religion; now we know that whenever science lays bare one of the facts of the universe we do but look on what the finger of the Infinite has written. When religion fights truth simply because truth speaks an unfamiliar tongue or fails to respect her traditions, she is fighting against God Himself.

Our need is not some strange, awe-inspiring voice that shall break the silence of the midnight sky; our need is an ear trained to hear, a spirit to understand and reverence the sublime voices that are ever speaking in our world, the voices of the beauty of nature, the joy of living, the stories of every-day divine heroism, the forces that are making a new world to-day as truly as ever one was made long ago.

The life of our day has not less of the divine than the life of long ago; but the message is harder to read; it is for an educated race; it is spiritual rather than merely material; it is from within; it is found in every good impulse, in every outgoing sympathy, in the kindling of eye as friend greets friend, in the good that men are doing, in the toleration that is becoming wider, the love stronger between man and man.

God speaks to men now as He spoke to Moses or to David, though the manner may have changed. But the poor in spirit, those with whom pride of the past has not served to make them unwilling to learn, these hear the voice; the pure in heart see Him; the seekers after truth find Him, and to all He comes in the thrilling moment or in the quiet hour when the voice of the heart makes itself heard.

## XI

The Price of Success

*The Law of Selection The Fallacy of Negation The Secret of All*

*No life is lost that is lived for love.*

*The only wealth you can possess is that you have in the heart.*

*Love never knows hardship, even when it meets it.*

*When men pray for harvest they often get a plow.*

*A man's holiness is to be measured by the happiness he creates.*

*The only way to reach heaven is by attempting to realize heaven now.*

*Whatever is saved by selfishness is lost to the true self.*

*One of the worst offenses against humanity is the pretense of divinity.*

*Weapons that fly off the handle have little effect on the walls of sin.*

*Many a man thinks that taking a lease on a front pew gives him a freehold on a corner lot in heaven.*

*Success is not in an endeavour to do a great thing but in repeated endeavours to do greater things.*



## THE LAW OF SELECTION

Jesus said, "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee," but this age finds it hard to accept that saying. It asks, If we are to throw life away why should it have been given to us? Why this selfhood with its passions, its surging desires, its great longing to be untrammelled and free if all is to be restrained and the passions are to be perpetually denied? If religion means, as some plainly have said, doing the things you don't want to do and leaving undone those you desire, then it is a mockery, a contradiction of our lives and natures.

Therefore there exists another philosophy which says, boldly: Live out all that is in you; do all the things you want to do; your passions in themselves are sufficient justification for their gratification. They say man is free; therefore, let him realize himself by giving free and full expression to every thought, inclination, appetite, and possibility within him.

When the average man puts the two philosophies in contrast he is likely to conclude that the path of self-denial, of stern repression, is the mistaken one; for, he will say, does it not contradict nature?—does it not involve the repression of natural instincts and make all life a perpetual fight against ourselves, a waste of forces, instead of, as it should be, a plan by which a man might find success through the realization of the best in himself?

But let another test be put to this philosophy—the test of life. How does it work out? What are the best lives, the lives that are richest and that have most enriched the world? Are they those that have given free rein to every fancy, that have nurtured and brought to fruition every growth of the heart's garden, whether it be thistle, brier, or poison root, or fair, nutritious product? Are they those that have given the tiger and the beast of prey free and full range of the life?

There is striking unanimity in the answer. The rich and the enriching lives have been those that have come by the path of the cross; they have learned repression, practiced denial, and suffered death. In every sphere the lights that have illumined the way of man's advance have not been the dancing flames of selfish, sensual passion but the consuming of the bodies of the martyrs and heroes, either burning in their passion for others or denying and losing all rather than denying truth and light.

The law runs through all; if you would have a perfect flower you must deny existence to many weeds, you must repress the rank growth, you must pluck off many a leaf and nip many a bud that the one may come to the fullness of its beauty. Through the grain of character goes the wise husbandman, and death is in his hand—the death of the less worthy, the harmful, and the enemy that life may abound yet more and more in that which is worthy.

In those fields where all things grow in their own way the weeds become the standard for all; license brings all down to the level of the lowest. But life is not license—it is choice, selection, sacrifice, death. Pain is the only price at which perfection may be purchased. Self-realization comes not by permitting all things to have their way but by subjecting all parts to the securing of that high end.

It is but cowardice that cries for the so-called natural outworking of everything within man; it seeks to save the labour of weeding, the pain of cutting here and pruning there. It asks only to be left alone. But that way lies the deepest pain of all, the pain of a life where there is nothing but tangles of weeds—no flowers, no capacities for joy, no power to will, no eye to see the good and true and beautiful.

No; the great Teacher was right when He called for self-denial and self-victory. He only is great, he alone has found life who has learned to bring all his parts and faculties into service, who brings all his body and self into subjection that all may be keen and well kept tools in the work he is doing as a servant of his brothers and his age. This service gives the supreme and sufficient motive for the suppression and elimination of all things that might hinder; the development of the best self for the best service by means of the cutting off of anything that might hinder or thwart the high and holy service purposes of a life.

## THE FALLACY OF NEGATION

The ancient law that nature abhors a vacuum holds true in the moral realm. The heart of man is never long empty. And yet the whole scheme of modern ecclesiastical regulation of life is built on the plan of making a man holy by emptying him of all evil and stopping there, leaving a negative condition, without a thought of the necessity of filling the void.

So long have we been trained in this that we are all a good deal more concerned about the things we ought not to do than about the things we ought to do. We spend our days nipping off the buds of evil inclinations, pulling up the weeds of evil habits, wondering how it happens they multiply so fast,

forgetting altogether the wiser plan we would adopt with weeds and briars in our gardens.

There are many who still think of the pious man as one who succeeds in accomplishing the largest number of repressions in his life, the ideal being the colourless life, never doing a thing that is wrong or subject to criticism. The energy of many a life is being spent in a campaign against a certain list of proscribed deeds. Blessed is the man—according to their beatitudes—who has the largest number of things he does not do.

But if rightness is abstinence from evil, then a lamp-post must always be better than a man, for it justly can lay claim to all the negative virtues. What an easy way of life is this, simply to find out the things we know other people like to do and to determine that if we only can leave them undone we are holy in the sight of heaven.

But not only is this a way of folly, it is a way of positive harm, a way fatal at last to the true life. To do no more than to turn out one set of devils only is to invite other and worse devils into the heart. To seek emptiness only is to invite yet more iniquity. An empty heart is as dangerous as an empty hour.

Emptiness is not holiness, it is idiocy. There cannot be an empty heart. To take a bad thing away from a man gives an opportunity for a worse thing to enter unless you simply choke the bad by implanting the good. Some of the most dangerous people are those who feel pious because they can say, We never did any harm.

Religion often has come to mean only a multitude of repressive regulations, apparently a scheme for making others abstain from those things for which we have no appetite. Little wonder that children feel only repulsion for a church which seems to take delight in finding impiety in every natural pleasure; that men turn from a path which, according to its prospectus, promises nothing but pain, privation, and emptiness.

We do not object to the pain and privation provided they have their purpose. But all nature objects to a course of life that maims, pinches, and restricts without corresponding and compensating development and liberty somewhere. We fight against every law of life and court the ways of death so long as we endeavour to develop character by putting it into bandages, leading strings, and legal restrictions.

There is evil to be eliminated; there are thousands of things we ought not to do. But the best way to get rid of the tares is to sow good wheat in abundance. The way to avoid the things we ought not to do is to do the things that ought to be done. The empty life is a standing invitation to temptation; the busy man seldom finds the devil's card left at his door.

Live the life above the things you would overcome. It never has been found necessary to pass a law prohibiting the president from playing marbles; larger interests fill his life so that these things do not even occur to him. Give a man a great work to do and you will save him from a thousand temptations to do small and unworthy things. Do not allow the modern conception of religion as gloom and denial to keep you from that which is your right as a spiritual being, the strength, joy and beauty of the divine life.

Holiness of life is not in innocence of evil but in positive forcefulness for good; not in doing as little harm as we can, but in filling the whole life with worthy, helpful, uplifting deeds. The good life not only has no debts—it has large assets, deep and lasting value; it enriches all life. It offers to the world not barren land claiming the virtue of freedom from the thorn and the brier, it crowns all with the abundance and glory of fir and myrtle.

## THE SECRET OF ALL

The words hold a large place in every alert life: Happiness, Health and Heart; some may put them Success, Strength and the Soul. It is easy to recognize the importance of the first two; that of the third is more remote. Some have imagined that religion emphasizes the last alone and ignores the other two.

Evidently it is a legitimate thing for the Christian to pray for prosperity; and it is right for him to try to answer his own prayers. Poverty is no proof of piety. Nothing about God is or can be poverty-stricken. He gives us a rich and glorious world, prolific in its resources; its life is rich and prosperous. Nature is running over, fairly rioting in splendour and wealth. The Creator has given man this garden of glory that he might enjoy it. It is a sin not to enter into its possession; he is dead already who does not desire prosperity, who no longer seeks success in life. It is an easy matter for the man who has made an all around failure to talk about the dispensations of Providence and the compensations of the future. Prosperity is always a sin to the man who lacks the pluck to secure it.

Yet many who seem to have failed may have succeeded best of all. Prosperity often comes in strange packages; it may even be labelled Adversity. Not all will succeed according to popular standards. Many will be more fortunate; they will win the riches of influence, friendship, family, thought, knowledge, love, character. It is not the things we have that make us rich; it is the amount of life we are capable of enjoying. The soul determines prosperity. It is the energizing spirit of man, stirring him out of the ignoble dust, creating the desire for more of the things of life and then for more of life itself. It determines values. It has a way of reversing things so that one man gets more out of a dollar book than another gets out of a million dollar bond. It alone gives appetite and appreciation, and, without these, though there may be many possessions, there is no prosperity.

What is true of prosperity is true also of health. Happily the days are gone when sickness passed for saintliness. No longer is red blood counted a foe of righteousness. We are getting back to the simpler, earlier thinking. It is not only right to seek health; it is wrong not to. The haggard face no longer indicates the holy heart; it is likely to evidence the opposite. We are getting over the notion that God is glorified by ruining the fair temple He has given us. Men no longer count on being beautiful angels in the skies because they have looked like walking sepulchres on our streets. It is an imperfect holiness that does not have health. Health, that is physical prosperity, is a duty.

And here, also, the soul is central. The clean heart, pure thoughts, controlled appetites, aspiring hopes, these make health. Evil temper, lust, worry, care, envy, these are the soul processes that disturb the life and destroy health. Happiness is health, and happiness is wholly of the heart. The soul is but the sum of all the things within, the force that moves all things in life; if within the man looks up, then he lives up; if the soul droops, he decays. What you are within determines what you are without; he who is poor in heart, in this inner life, will be poor in prosperity and weak in health, no matter how much he possesses. But he who with his soul takes in the world of beauty, of love, of joy, who reaches out to heaven and God, all these things are his and he is rich and strong indeed.

## **XII**

Divine Service

*The Ideal Service The Orthodox Service The Heavenly Service*

*Kindness is the evidence of kingliness.*

*The surest way to impoverish your heart is to hoard up your love.*

*A really smart man will refrain from saying things that smart.*

*Many a prayer for vision ought to be changed to a petition for vertebra.*

*The damning doubts are those that deter us from good deeds.*

*The leaders of men are not the ones who are trying to get ahead of their fellows.*

*Folks who are too good for anything are good for nothing.*

*It's hard to steer a straight course if your conscience is in your pants pocket.*

*You do not have much faith in your Father unless you have some in His family.*

*No man can have a place in the kingdom of heaven who is complacent to the ills of earth.*

## **XII**

### **THE IDEAL SERVICE**

Never was the greatest of all greater than when He put about Him the badge of the servant. His example has made the towel, the apron, the badge of true honour. Nothing could have surprised those men who were quarrelling over their precedence more than that their great Master should stoop to perform this menial service of washing their feet. Like many who call themselves His to-day they strove over chief seats, honours, titles, and dignities. They were seeking the chief places and by their strife

showing themselves fit only for the lowest. Nowhere is the sense of honour more easily slain than in the search for honours.

The only dignity that really adorns a man is that which comes without his demanding it. How often have the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus turned the world away from Him by their examples of vanity, greed, lust for power, their pomp and pride of self-glory. They who were sent to be the shepherds of men have fleeced the flock for their own adorning and then fought amongst themselves to see who should wear the choicest robes. History has shown that they were wrong and their Master was right. The greater their greedy ambition the greater their shame; the higher the place they have claimed the lower has been that which the voice of humanity has awarded them.

On the other hand there shine forth those who have followed Him in lowly service; theirs is the honour to-day. Because He took upon Him the form of a servant then now is the kingdom and the power and the glory His.

So it has always been, sovereignty comes by way of service; heaven and earth unite in honouring those who have not scorned the humble place of helpfulness. John says that it was because Jesus was conscious of His divine origin and His glorious destiny that He took the towel and did the work of the slave. Only those who realize their true greatness can ignore the littleness of man's petty dignities, can lose all sense of stooping, of condescension when they serve others, and so can be of service to mankind. A man proves that he is the son of a heavenly Father by his service for his least brother. When that dignity, heaven born, is in a man's heart there is nothing in the dirt he may touch by deeds of kindness that can defile him; contact does not contaminate.

Love never thinks of any of its services as loathsome. That from which a superficial dignity would revolt love does with rejoicing. It thinks nothing of the honour or the dishonour, but only of the helpfulness it may render. It is not asking whether men are approving or whether promotion is coming. It needs no promotion or approval; the work itself is the highest reward; the service elevates to the loftiest of all positions.

The world's sovereigns are its servants. He makes an alliance with God who helps a fellow man. Work is that by which the Creator has lifted man above the creatures of the field, and the work that sacrifices that it may serve is that by which God lifts man to Himself. The heavenly gate may be shut to robes and miters, epaulettes and crowns; but it shall be open wide to that great throng who bear the stains of toil, who have served their fellows, who wear the apron of sacrificing service; and the Son of the carpenter shall lead them in.

This is a working world; its Maker is pictured as a worker; there is no better evidence of religion than willingness to serve. Work determines a man's worth to the world. And religion must be known by the things it does, and not, as many have fondly supposed, by the dreams it has.

## THE ORTHODOX SERVICE

This is a working world, with no place for the idler, whether he be high or low, rich or poor. The measure of a man is the service he renders humanity. Actions are measured by the same rule. The value of religion to life, its right to time and place, is measured by this, Does it help or inspire men to service, does it increase the quantity or improve the quality of the work that they do for their world?

Men rightly ignore the piety that satisfies itself with platitudes on the duties of others, or with philosophical speculations on problems which, if they were accurately solved, would contribute nothing either to our peace, our possessions, or our personal characters. Yet, how many imagine that they are profoundly pious because they cherish properly indorsed opinions, duly certified as to their antiquity.

They who profess to follow the Man of Nazareth cannot do it by sitting in their pews or kneeling at their altars; they cannot do it by dreaming of a place of bliss or picturing one of torment. One of the first lessons He gives His disciples is that it is not he that speaketh the word, but he that doeth the will, who is pleasing to God.

Nor do men do His will in any important or complete sense by going to church or serving in its meetings or on its committees. When a man is ordained to divine orders, that is, to give himself wholly to do the will and work of the Most High, it is said that he becomes a minister. If "minister" means anything at all it means servant, one who works for others, who ministers to them. The Master spoke of Himself as being among men as one who served them. The only orthodox service is the service of humanity.

This is religion, such a consciousness of the reality of the Infinite Spirit that you will steadily do the

things that that spirit of love is doing in this world, ministering to men, binding up the broken in heart, lifting the lame, and leading the wandering, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, bringing light and love and cheer to those that sit in darkness, you will become feet and fingers to God.

One does not need to wait for a special garb to do this religious work; one does not need to wait for formal ordination; whoever loves men already is divinely ordained to serve them. One does not need to wait for a church or a special organization; the sufficient motive is deep, sacrificing love; the method will be just what the Master's was, to go where men are and help them.

After all, what this world needs is not so much that men shall go to their fellows with money, with clothes, or even with employment; it needs that they shall just go to them. The good mixer, who mingles with men, who knows how they live, and what they think, how they suffer, and what they feel, if, going amongst them, he carries a clean heart, a love for his fellows, a firm faith in heaven, and hope for men, is doing them more good by his presence than he who may send carloads of goods.

Men did not need that Jesus should wear a label saying that the Most High was with Him; the more He mingled with men, the more clearly they saw He belonged to God. What He was willing to do for them showed that they, too, were the children of the Most High. If any man would have that infinite presence with him, if he desires the deep sense of the spiritual, let him seek it not in closet or convent, but in the touch of hand and in the sight of the face of friend and fellow being.

Many of us are worried at times because our lives seem wasted in doing little things; we would become immortal by saving our powers for some great deed. We need to remember Him whom the world most easily remembers and most highly honours, the Man of Nazareth, whose life was spent in trivial services, doing the next thing that came to hand, helping ordinary people in every-day needs. Yet God was with Him, as He ever is with those who love their fellows in sincere service.

## THE HEAVENLY SERVICE

It seems easy to see something peculiarly holy, something deeply religious in the occupations and acts of the priesthood or the ministry. But thinking of these as religious and of such service as divine we fall into the habit of thinking that they alone, in all the world of action, are divine. We set on one side of life the religious service limited to these formal acts and on the other side what we call the secular life and service.

We have sacred days, sacred deeds, sacred callings, religious services; all separate from the rest of life, belonging in a department, a pigeon-hole, by themselves. Whatever is not of these is of the world, worldly, secular, lacking in the peculiar aroma of sanctity that attaches to the church or the profession of religion.

There are many who desire to do some religious work; who fain would engage in divine service. There is in almost every breast a desire to do something high and holy, something that is not necessary, utilitarian, with some other motive than bread-winning. But there seems to be no opportunity; such deeds are supposed to belong to special callings; one must be ordained to do divine service.

The truth is, divine service is the duty and high privilege of every human being; we all are divinely called to the ministry; the service of God and humanity belongs to us all. We must not wait for ordaining hands nor ecclesiastical robes nor for the environment of official sanctity. Every impulse to do good, to show human love, and do loving service is a commission from high heaven.

The good Master invites men and women to His kind of service, the highest and holiest known to all the ages. He never was separated to a clerical calling; He did not wait for an ordaining council nor did He confine His divine service to prayer and praise or to the activities of the church ritual. His divine service was the service of the sons of men, the going about doing good.

Heavenly work is not work for some far off heaven; it is the work of making this present earth like heaven. The work of God is not working for an absent deity; it is doing the work that the God of all love would do in this world; it is being feet and fingers, voice and lips to the great Spirit who is over and in us all. It is making that spirit of love real, actual, concrete to our fellows.

The holiest work in this world may be done in the humblest places; the most divine service may not be in the cathedral but in the cottage; the angels may pass by the intoning choir to listen to a mother's crooning cradle song or to watch the patient service, the loving kindness shown in washing the faces or wiping away the tears of dirty and destitute children.

The holy service which will fill your heart with joy and give you the unfading crown of eternity, never

will be done if you are waiting for some ecclesiastical uniform to do it in. Whatever is done in the spirit of the infinite love, in the spirit of the great Master, that truly is divine and glorious.

It is the good work that is glorious. It is a thing more truly divine to do well your daily duty, to put out good, honest work, than it is to wear a clerical garb or perform professional religious duties. The honour, the worthiness, the glory of your work may be measured by the spirit in which it is done and by its helpfulness and worth to the world.

All life becomes glorious as we see that even in the least of our daily tasks we may be doing the will of God, that it may be just as necessary a part of the divine service that I should serve at a desk, a counter, or a machine, should sweep a room or tend a child as that another should preach or pray. For the great Master of all who knows all our work, measures it all, not as we do; He sees the glory of the cup of cold water and the divinity of the commonplace.

## **XIII**

Our Father and Our Fellows

*The Primary Reconciliation Faith in Our Fellows The Law of Forgiveness*

*Sorrow is sympathy's school.*

*Love makes the heaviest load seem light.*

*To be willing to be saved alone is to be lost.*

*The truly godly see something divine in all.*

*Your appreciation may be another's inspiration.*

*Kindness is the sign of divine kinship.*

*You cannot knit the souls of men with soft sawder.*

*You cannot be a leader and lose sight of those who are to be led.*

*The shortness of the day excuses no man from greatness of endeavour.*

*When a man thinks of nothing but his sins and failures he will have nothing else to think of.*

*Lots of people who talk of their lives as blue are only colour blind, they either are green or yellow.*

*He is only shortsighted who pronounces the world bad after looking in his own heart.*

*Many a man is waiting for an inspiration who would find success at once if he was not so afraid of a little perspiration.*

## **XIII**

### **THE PRIMARY RECONCILIATION**

Men in the days of the great Teacher were as we are to-day, prone to compound for the neglect of duties near at hand by the adoration of spiritual delights far off. They talked about getting right with God while they continued to do wrong to men. The problem of the hypocrite who is so thrilled with the delights of heaven that he scorns earthly duties and decencies is not a new one.

How easy it is to substitute syllogisms for service, to think that we do our duty by describing it, so to exhaust oneself in pleasant and seductive dreams of a distant heaven that we have no power left to apply to the problems of a needy present-day world.

The mockery of religion to-day is that men and women are going to the churches, singing themselves into ecstatic complacency and imaginary harmony with their God while their greed is crushing the hearts of the helpless and they are blinding themselves to the world's gloom and pain that unhindered

they may enjoy spiritual delights.

Things cannot be right in our relations to the Father of spirits until they are made right in our relations with our brothers in the flesh. In Christianity social righteousness is basic to spiritual blessing. The ideal kingdom waits for ideal conditions and relations amongst its subjects.

The way to the Father lies through the brother. If you would learn to love God—and how indefinite and idealistic that seems to most of us—the lesson is simple, first learn to love His other children, especially the helpless, needy, and wronged. Delights high and spiritual always will be remote until duties near at hand are done.

The revival we most of all need to-day is a revival of the social conscience, the recognition of the fact that we can offer no gift acceptable, in the temple of worship or the place of prayer, until we have washed our hands from the blood of our fellows, that we can pay nothing to God until we have in earnest set about paying our debts to men.

Anxious, perhaps, to claim our rights as children of the Father in heaven, we have forgotten that that title is promised to the peacemakers. What avail is it to pray, Thy kingdom come, if we block its advent by cherishing enmity in our hearts? What use is it to carry hearts torn with malice, souls sunken in selfishness, and spirits torn with pride and covetousness to the place that belongs to the meek and lowly?

Many a man is going to church and coming away empty in heart; perhaps he has given up any hope of finding solace in religion, who would find, as it were, the windows of heaven opened up if he should give himself for an hour to making some other helpless lives happy, to righting some wrong or bringing some joy to lives embittered and oppressed.

The pathway to God is a plain one, strikingly lacking in romance, with no attendant visible angelic choir. It is the doing of whatever duty or kindness I owe to those near me, the breaking down of walls of prejudice—spite fences built in ignorance and hatred—the learning to love and help, the seeking of peace, good feeling, and harmony with all men.

This does not mean that all must become professors of sociology; the study of social theories often is a substitute for the practice of social duties; but that we must seek out the good in men, we must set ourselves right with them, we must discharge all our responsibilities towards men before we can realize God. The kingdom comes as we recognize the kingliness in all the sons of the kingdom, as we express our faith in God by friendship for our fellows.

## FAITH IN OUR FELLOWS

Poor Peter has never been much of a favourite with the preachers; he was so thoroughly unstable, unideal. But the people have always had a tender feeling for him, partly because he was a fisherman, partly because he was so much like the rest of us. Nothing is more striking in the life of Jesus than His affection for ordinary men. The cultured Pharisees, the philosophical Sadducees seem to have much less attraction to Him than the rude fisherman and the toiler. These men were often weak, sometimes cowardly, obstinate, dull, mediocre; yet He committed His kingdom to them; He believed in them. Before they had faith in Him He had faith in them; and that ultimately made them men.

It sounded much like cruel sarcasm when He told that weak, vacillating Simon that he was a rock. Those who knew Peter best must have smiled; he was more like a jellyfish. But Jesus could see the best that was in a man. He detected the hidden good even in Peter. He proves His own goodness by His faith in the good in every man.

Somewhere in every man there is some good. Overlaid it may be by passion, by habits, by prejudice grown out of wrong and suffering perchance; but still it is there. Faith in this and sympathy, these are the golden keys that unlock the doors to where the good lies buried.

The saviours of society have always been those who looked for the best in it. If you go through life seeking the beast in man, you will find it, and the chances are it will devour you; if you look for the beauty that is from above you will find it, and it will bless you. It is just as necessary to have faith in man as it is to have faith in God. If men cannot become good, then there is no God in the sense of a power that makes for goodness. The optimist not only believes in the best, he creates the better.

Some there are who reluctantly admit that God is a little better than they are, though that may be due to His circumstances, but they have never imagined for an instant that any one else is at all good. Believe that men are wholly bad and they will not disappoint you. Every man somehow responds to the

expectations of others. You had better damn a man than despair of him. Neither a church nor an individual can help this world when they have more confidence in the power of evil to become all pervasive than in the power of the Most High to make His purposes felt in every heart as truly as He makes His sun to shine on the just and the unjust. The church first consigns men to perdition and then wonders why they are reluctant to walk with it the other way. So long as you have faith in total depravity you will find some facts to substantiate it.

But there is a better way. Sympathy with men will do more for them than sermons on their sins. Look for the best in them and you will find things better than you expected. There are flower beds as well as garbage heaps in every heart; at least, there are spots where seeds of the fairest flowers of heaven may be sown.

You do not have to be a fool to have faith in your fellows. You do not need to take the padlocks off your house; but you do need to take them off your heart. There may be those whom it would be wrong to trust with your cash box; but it is a greater wrong to withhold from them your kindness. You can show them that you believe the best instead of the worst of them.

The great Teacher told men that He came not to condemn but to give life. His followers have too often occupied themselves wholly with condemnation and then wondered that their sentences saved none. Every soul knows its own sentence; what it needs to feel is that God and all good men are with it, helping it to shake off that sentence, to arise and return to the Father, that, instead of all things conspiring to keep a man down, there is a cloud of witnesses cheering him on, a mighty choir invisible inspiring his heart. And there is nothing any man can do of greater worth to the world than to cheer on another by his faith in him, his high expectation of him, his wise blindness to some little faults, and his propagating approval of the least beginnings of any good. Men are the saviours of men by their faith in men.

## THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS

A silly interpretation often leads to the utter rejection of a law. Sentimentalists have caused men of sense to pronounce Christ's law of forgiveness an impractical one. Yet we indorse it every time we utter the Lord's prayer, and still we hope to be forgiven whether we find it possible to forgive or not. If this law means the mental flabbiness that sends bouquets to bloody criminals and petitions the pardon of murderers and the release of the foes of humanity, we must reject it as the utterance of one unacquainted with the rugged facts of life.

But forgiveness and pardon are two different things; forgiveness is between man and man; pardon is a matter of executive power. You can forgive a child and still punish him. The forgiveness that does away with consequences would make this an immoral world. No greater wrong can be done to a man than to protect him from the deserts of his evil deeds. This is as unjust as to withhold the rewards of the right.

The difference between the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and the law of the great Teacher lies largely in the spirit of dealing with the offenses. The old spirit was that of getting even with the wrongdoer. His act was largely regarded from the personal standpoint; a crime was individual and not social. Revenge followed wrongdoing.

But Jesus says it is better to lift a man up than to get even with him. It is better to help men to the right than to satisfy your desire for revenge. Forgiveness is more than saying, "Go without punishment"; rather it says, "Come learn a better way; live without sin." Forgiveness takes malice from the mind of the offended; it substitutes for it the motive of friendship for the offender.

Revenge says, "I will make it worse for you than you have made it for me." Sentimentalism says: "Let the poor victim of circumstances go; send him a rosewater spray and an embroidered text and he won't do it again." But love, she of the clear eye and the steady hold, takes him by the hand in silence, lifts him up, and leads him, perhaps by paths of pain, to his better self. Love puts his sins behind her back and teaches him to face her way. Love lets the wrong teach its own lesson, bear its own fruit. And in her labour for him she forgets her own pain and loss caused by his offense.

The best way to forgive a burglar would not be to let him out of jail, but to teach him the laws of property, to train him in the self-respect that would lead to industry, to make him a brother and a fellow worker among men instead of an outcast and a social parasite. The test of any forgiveness is its helpfulness, the manner in which it wipes out the enmity of the victim and turns the guilty into better ways.



Many say, I can forgive, but I cannot forget. No one asks you to forget; but you cannot fully forgive unless you will forego the feeling of enmity and the desire for revenge. You cannot make any one forget that which he has once known; but you can substitute helpfulness for hatred and restoration for revenge. True love simply discounts the past as a ground for present action; it refuses to determine its personal bearing and deeds in to-day by the other's ill deeds of yesterday.

All we are asked to do is to forgive as we are forgiven. Our hope is that when we have fallen our friends will not lose their faith in us nor entirely forsake us, that they will give us another chance; not that they will shield us from the fruitage of our follies and our falseness, but that they will not shut us off forever from their faces.

So far from forgiveness being the weakness of the thoughtless, it is the helpfulness of the strong and the wise. To forgive a man will not mean to escape from the trouble of securing his punishment; it will not mean the weak complaisance of indolent tolerance. It will mean thought for his weakness, taking up his burden, doing the brother's part for him, the endeavour to do for him what we would like to have the Father of us all do for us all.

## XIV

Men and Mammon

*Riches and Righteousness Religion and Business The Moral End of Money-Making*

*Better a sweet failure than a sour success.*

*An itching palm causes a crook in the fingers.*

*Many a moral squint comes from a money monocle.*

*The fortunate people are those who believe they are.*

*We are always building bridges for things with wings.*

*The best way to wipe out a friendship is to sponge on it.*

*Many a man thinks he is pious when he is only petrified.*

*A little plain honesty is worth untold professional holiness.*

*The religion that runs to fever usually evens up with chills.*

*Nothing is easier than being benevolent with other people's money.*

## XIV

### RICHEs AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let no man take it, that the statement on the inaccessibility of heaven to the rich involves the opposite, how easily shall they that have nothing enter in. The people who have lived pulseless lives are apt to point to their poverty as the proof of their piety. But righteousness is neither a matter of riches nor of rags. The great Teacher glorifies neither. The qualifications for citizenship in His kingdom strike deeper than that.

His words have nothing to do with the bitter envy of the demagogue who denounces those who have earned that for which he would not labour. He measures men not by that they have but by that they are. He looks through both the fine linen and the tattered rags to the man. Money interests Him only as it affects character. The question of riches and poverty is not a matter of housing and eating, but what a man does for himself and his world with that which he has.

Riches of themselves do not bar a man from heaven; but they full often eat into his heart, become of absorbing interest, and so effectually and forever blind the inner vision to the best things. It is not that heaven has shut its gates, but that the love of money, the selfishness, born of cupidity, has paralyzed those spiritual senses by which he might have found his way therein.

The possession of wealth is not a sin; to some it has come almost without effort, even against their wills; but it does constitute one of the most severe tests that can be set before a soul. It increases the difficulties of the right life, because it enlarges so greatly the responsibilities. The greater the wealth the greater the trust laid upon a man as the steward of the produce of the earth.

The principle holds of all possessions; all are tests of character. A man can love gold just as ardently when he has but a grain as when he has possessions beyond computation. A single dollar, laid on the heart, can shut out the light of heaven as effectually as can a million. The relation between riches and righteousness is not determined by the balance in the bank, but by the balance that a man succeeds in maintaining in his heart between his own interests and the trusteeship which possession places upon him.

Money makes men as well as unmakes them. The burdens, the tests, the responsibilities it entails, the temptations it presents, all form part of life's great lesson. Out of the struggle between self and the service we owe the world, out of the keen fighting against covetousness, and the battle against the debasing tendencies of the love for gold and the greed for gain arise the giants—or fall the lost souls.

The rich young ruler came to Jesus and faced his test; the demand that he should sell all and give to the poor simply put his heart on trial; it set before him the great choices; it decided as to the things which he held first. To him the possession of things was more than the possibilities of using them in service; before the great test he fell.

It is just as easy and often fully as dangerous to set your heart on the gold you haven't got as it is to fall into the snare of the miser. Everything depends on the place you give to riches in your life. One man seeks them as a prize to be won and enjoyed for his own gratification, his own glory and fame; another seeks them only as larger avenues to usefulness, and to him riches come as tools, as servants, as possibilities of making his life count for more.

Some men die with their houses full of tools unused; they have made the fatal mistake of setting their hearts on the tools instead of on the work. Others come to their accounting possessing as many tools, but all of them shining from hard use, and counting as their treasures not the tools but the things produced, the good accomplished. Wealth is for work and the work is for the making of the man. They enter the kingdom who are kingly, whether they learned the royal lesson and acquired the heavenly character through the school of poverty or that of riches.

## RELIGION AND BUSINESS

The question, can a man be a Christian and succeed in business, though old, is still asked every day. There are yet a great many who regard religion and business as conflicting pursuits, and they attempt a compromise by the clear-cut division of time into business hours and church time. Others are answering this question in the negative. "Look at me," they say. "I have always been pious and honest, and therefore I have failed to make money or achieve success; religion does not pay."

If the question means, can a man take out his backbone and succeed in business, there need be no hesitancy as to the answer. If becoming a Christian means the elimination of all virility from the character, the substitution of soft soap and sawdust for strength and diligence, religion cannot be regarded as a help in business. There are too many people who think that sloth is a sign of spirituality and that you cannot be a saint unless you have softening of the brain.

But it is simply whether you can keep your whole life, in the market or out, up to the level of a certain ideal, whether you can be honest, true, fair-minded, unselfish, merciful, and kind and at the same time do the work and meet the exigencies of modern commercial and industrial strife. It is whether you can measure steadily towards heaven's ideal while mastering earth's daily duties.

The question is either a reproach to religion or to business. It is assumed by many, with especial conviction by those who know business only by reputation, that it demands the sacrifice constantly of honour, truth, mercy, and every other virtue. The man who thinks that he is pious because he is pulseless, draws a fancy picture of red-blooded men fighting, intriguing, slaying, like demons new from the pit; and that, he thinks, is modern business.

Strife is everywhere. If religion means sequestration from temptation we need to pray to be delivered from it. There is as much danger of a man's losing his character, selling his soul, in the church as in the market. The temptation to the merchant to misrepresent his goods for a larger profit is not greater than that which comes to the minister to magnify his abilities for an increase in fame.

Things honourable are the same everywhere; they are written deep within us, and by them church

and mart both are judged. Every man knows that the chief business of life, whether through commerce, toil, study, recreation, or worship, is to develop the best life, to make of himself a true, full grown man, who shall render to this world a full man's service.

Business is a more effective school of character than any other we have. If some of the standards of that school have been unworthy—and who shall say they have not?—it is our duty to revise them, to make them higher; not to abolish the school, not to stay away from it because it is imperfect, but to make it fit to serve its true purpose.

Business always will be immoral as long as it is an end in itself. The product is greater than the machine, the making of character greater than the mechanism by which we make a living. The serious danger comes when a man begins to lay his soul on the counter, when he reverses the course in this school of character and makes the end serve the means, when he sacrifices honour, truth, and the soul that business may succeed.

Only failure lies that way. No business ever became permanently great by making its people small. Success here is to be measured by the soul. No matter what a man may be doing he must keep himself above his task. The work must serve the worker.

The question is whether we are serving business or it is serving us. If a man lives for his wage he will sacrifice everything to get it, but if he works that he may find life, then he will ever refuse to lose the things of which life is made in the pursuit of success. He knows he does not have to make money, but he does have to make manhood. That is the end both of religion and of business.

## THE MORAL END OF MONEY-MAKING

There are those who talk of money and business as though these were necessarily and intrinsically evil. It is often supposed that capacity for goodness is established by incapacity for business, while those to whom poverty seems inevitable find consolation in regarding it as evidence of piety.

Large numbers of otherwise sensible people feel that there is some unavoidable conflict between the ideal and the real, between what they call the sacred and the secular, between the things they would like to do and to be and the things they actually have to do as part of their daily affairs and duties.

Probably the greater number try to meet the difficulty by dividing their lives and interest into separate parts. They say, business is business; religion is another thing altogether; I will work hard and honestly at my business and look forward to the comforts and pleasures of religion and ideal things.

So it happens that there are those who feel that to speak of religion on a week-day reveals a lack of the sense of the fitness of things, while other good people are quite sure that it is a wholly irreverent thing to speak of business on a Sunday. We tend to dwell alternately in two sets of apartments, the practical and the pious.

Even where there are no such sharp lines through the life we feel that manufacture and the market, money-making, and trading tend to blunt the finer sensibilities and act as a hindrance to the realization of our ideals, while, on the other hand, we are sure that the life of ideals is unfitted for business.

The result of this separation and apparent antagonism is that we cannot develop our lives symmetrically; we are torn by conflicting purposes; we fail to see any ideal ends in business or to find any practical values in religion. Religion without business tends to dreamy, purposeless moral enervation; business without ideal ends and aims to grossness and materialism.

We need to spiritualize all our acts, our whole lives, our business, our work, our pleasures, by giving them moral intent and value, so as to unify the sacred and the secular, the utilitarian, and the ideal by making each serve the other.

It does not make so much difference whether a man is engaged in money-making or in writing poems and picturing the fair dreams of better things; the question is this, is the money-making for the sake of the money or for some high and worthy end? What is the motive that impels either the dealer in dollars or the dealer in dreams?

Our ideals, visions, aspirations, and our religion become most damaging if they fail to find expression in conduct and work; lacking the practical, they result in a character that is satisfied with contemplating the good instead of realizing it. The man who sinks his soul in dollars may personally be no worse than he who allows it to atrophy while he dreams.

Here in religion are the dynamic and the motives that bear men on and buoy them up to do the toil, bear the burdens, stand in the fight of daily living; here are the visions that lift our eyes from the desk and the machine, from profits and discounts, and help us to see the worthy prizes of life.

No man could become a saint by separating himself from this world's turmoil and reading his Bible alone; neither can any man find strength and stability for life's business and battle, find satisfaction in its service and rewards, unless he sees through its dollars and its dirt the moral ends of all this world's work.

This noisy mill of daily living may be the greatest blessing we know; it is the opportunity for the expression of our highest ideals, for the translation of religion into terms of daily living; it is the place where character is molded by its stress, its calls to the strong will, and its manifold opportunities for the service of all mankind by each man in his place.

## **XV**

The Every-Day Heaven

*The Beauty of Holiness The Gladness of Goodness The True Paradise*

*Self shrinks the soul.*

*The keen eye needs the kindly heart.*

*There's no argument equal to a happy smile.*

*Imaginary evils have more than imaginary effects.*

*You never find truth by losing the temper.*

*Menial work may be noblest service.*

*They who live off the flock are never willing to die for it.*

*The life that would be fruitful seeks showers as well as sunshine.*

*Kindness makes all kin.*

*All we get from heaven we owe to earth.*

*Pain is a small price to pay for the joy of sacrifice.*

*He who gives on feeling generally begrudges in fact.*

*Every loss met by love leads to gain.*

*The long look within ourselves will cure us of a lot of impatience with other folks.*

*The last person to enter heaven will be the one whose religion has all been in the first person singular.*

*We often talk a good deal about the salvation of souls in order to escape service for the salvation of society.*

*Much that is called orthodoxy is scepticism at heart, fear to examine the foundations lest there are none.*

## **XV**

### **THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS**

Religion ought to be the most natural, desirable, and attractive thing to man, for it simply stands for the development of the best in us, the coming into the full and rich heritage that is ours as spiritual beings, and the realization of our highest possibilities of character and service. He who ignores religion

is cutting himself off from the best and most beautiful possibilities in his life.

Some have talked of the necessity of making religion attractive. It does not have to be made attractive; there is nothing more desirable than the peace, the power, and prosperity of the real life which it confers. It is the imitation, the false and prejudiced presentation of religion that men endeavour to dress up attractively. In that they never succeed, for cramping the soul and twisting the intellect ever are opposed by the best in us.

From the caricature of religion we turn with loathing. Mummeries and mockeries, fads and forms leave us empty and impatient. The heart of man goes out to things fair, lovely, joyous, and uplifting, and they who find no God in the elaborate sermon or the service in the church somehow are thrilled with the feeling of the divine and inspiring in the woods and field and mountains.

All things good, all things attractive and lovely, uplifting and sublime have but one source. They touch our hearts because they come from the heart of all being; they reach our spirits because they are spiritual. Deep calls unto deep when the divine in man answers to the divine in the world without, in human affections, in noble aspirations, and in glorious deeds.

Too long have we believed that only the unpleasant, the gloomy, and repellent could be right or religious. There is a type of conscience that determines action by the rule that if a thing is pleasant or beautiful it must be sinful and wrong. To such souls it is a sin to be sunny in disposition, to delight in the Father's fair world, with its glowing riches and bounty dropping daily from His hand.

It would be safer to say that sin must be somewhere lurking wherever there is deformity, pain, or discord—that, as a common phrase has it, the bleak and barren is the evidence of that which is forsaken of God. Things desolate are not divine. Religion is not repression but development into a fullness and beauty far beyond our dreams.

It is a good thing to see the divine in all things fair and lovely; to take them as evidences that the love that once pronounced this world good in its primeval glory still is working, still is seeking to enrich our lives and lead them out in fullness of joy. Why should not we, like the poets and preachers of ancient Israel, taste again of the gladness of living.

Character may need for its full development the storms and wintry blasts of life, but it needs just as truly and just as much the sunshine, the days when the heart goes out and joins in the song of nature, when something leaps within us at the gladness of being alive, and we drink in of the infinite love that is over all.

Just as the sun seems to call the flowers out of the dark earth and draw out their beauty, calls forth the buds and brings the blossom into perfect fruit, so there is a spirit of divine life in our world calling us out to the best, seeking to woo us to the things beautiful. Man needs not to repress his life, but to learn to respond to every worthy impulse, every high hope, to find the life beautiful.

The beauty of holiness is the beauty of character. It is the adjustment of life to nature and neighbour and heaven so that strength and harmony ensue, so that duty becomes a delight, labour a song of praise, and out of life's burden and battle the beauties of godliness, of love, and tenderness, joy and gratitude begin to bloom.

Lay hold on everything good and true, on all things glad and elevating; cherish every fair thought and aspiration; learn to see the essentially religious in whatever lifts up life, in whatever helps humanity, and so make life rich in heavenly treasure and glowing with the glory of other worlds.

## THE GLADNESS OF GOODNESS

Life's poverty is due, not to what we have had and lost, not to what has been withheld or taken from us, but to the good which we might have had which we carelessly have passed by. No others despoil us as we despoil ourselves by our blindness and indifference to the wealth of our own lives and the beauty ever close at hand.

We who scurry over land and sea, who dig, and toil, and fret to find happiness, come back at last to learn that the sweet-faced guest has been waiting close by our door all the time.

He perishes in the pitiless snows who, blind to the good and the glory in every valley and hillside, heeds only the impulse to climb and find the good in some remote height. Ambition and pride lift ever new peaks ahead only to mock him when at last, worn, spent, and empty in heart, he falls by the way.

The old theology talked much of a heaven far away, to be attained in the remote future; the new theology often seems inclined to ignore any heaven, but what the hearts of men need is the sense of the heaven that is all about them, the God who ever is near, and the blessedness even now attainable.

Some live in the past, complacently contemplating the glories that once were theirs or their ancestors'; some live in the future, dreaming of felicities yet to be; but they are wise only who live to the full in the present, who catch the richness and beauty, all the wealth that the passing hour or the present opportunity may have.

He is truly godly who sees God in all things, in the affairs of this day, in the faces of living men, in the flowers and fields, who sees all the divine wonder and beauty of life, and not he who sees the Most High only in some legendary past or in a strange, imaginary future.

No man becomes strong by reminiscence of his breakfast or dreaming of his next meal alone; each portion of time must have its own fitting food. The soul of man never can find its fullness through either history or prophecy; it needs the sense of the spiritual in this living, pulsating, matter-of-fact present.

This world is slovenly, sinful, and evil because so many of us are content with the past or the future, with myth or with imagination, and fail to demand the development of the good that is our heritage to-day. The better day comes not by dreams, but by each man doing the best he can and securing all the good he can for his own day.

We need to give up the plan of saving the world by the piety of postponed pleasures and to find the fullness of life in the present, to get below the surface of things and discover life's real riches, to interpret this daily toil and struggle, and all this world of ours, in terms of the divine and infinite.

How much it would mean to our lives if we might learn, instead of sighing for the impossible, to get all the sweetness and joy that is in the things we have, how rich we would find the common lot to be, how many things that now seem dreary and empty would bloom into new beauty. In a child's smile, a wild flower's fragrance, a glint of sunlight, things possible to all, we would find joys unspeakable and full of glory.

This does not mean dull content with things as they are; it does mean the development of the faculties of appreciation, the growth of the life in power to see, the development of vision. It means the transformation of the dull earth with the glory of the ideal.

Some day, when we look back over our lives, how keen will be our regret as we realize what we have missed, how we have spurned the substance of life's lasting treasures, human loves, friendships, everyday beauties, and happiness, while chasing the shadows of imaginary joys.

## THE TRUE PARADISE

The religion that has relations only to heaven and angels, or only to a supreme being remote and detached from daily life and from our families and friends, our business and affairs, issues in personal selfishness and is one of the causes of social disorganization and need.

It postpones to that dim future the problems that ought to be solved in the present. It promises those who are broken with the injustice and greed of their fellows a place where right would prevail and rest would be their portion in the future. It shifts to an imaginary and ideal world all the perplexities and wrongs of the real present world.

That kind of teaching ingrained in generations accounts for the dull patience, the stolid, brute-like content of the peasant in Europe; he is born a bearer of burdens, a tiller of the soil, to walk bent and never look up; it is all endurable because it is all so short; he some day will be better off than kings and emperors are now.

But as the generations are born the inspiring vision of that future loses its force; the ideals are gone and the children come into the world with their fathers content with their present condition, but devoid of aspiration and also devoid of their father's faith in the compensations of the future.

Then comes the reaction. Some daring spirits assert that if there is any good, if there is equity and rights, men ought to enter into and enjoy them here and now. And some who catch the vision of a God of real love are unwilling to believe that He keeps from His children the present joys of His home; they invite to a present heaven.

Then how easy it is to fall into the error of seeking only a material present-day paradise, to live as if

the only things worth living for were food and clothes and pleasant circumstances. Better a worthy, beautiful ideal afar off than an unworthy and debasing one already realized. The heaven that so many are seeking will but bring all men to the level of the brute.

The danger is that we shall miss the real benefit of this great truth that whatever good is designed for man may be realized in large measure while he lives and shall make his good to consist only in goods. Better conditions of living easily become the foe of the best. Heaven is not meat and drink; it is the better heart.

Making houses and lands the supreme end of living is little better than looking forward to harps and crowns. It is easy, being freed from slavery to a superstition to relapse into slavery to our lower selves. We are in danger of living for a living instead of for our lives. We are "on the make" instead of being engaged in making manhood. We are digging the lead of commercial advantage with the gold shovels of character.

We may be measured by our own measurements. In sermons and orations we assure ourselves that we are a great people because we have here so many acres, so many millions of bushels of corn and of wheat, so high wages, so vast financial resources. We are living in the glut of things and setting these things as the end of living.

All this does not mean that prosperity is wrong; it does not mean that misery or poverty is a virtue. The danger is not in our many acres, our high wages, our millions of money; the danger is that these are the ends instead of the means; that we are existing for our living; that we make the man the tool of his money instead of the money being the making of the man.

Every man has in his breast the keys to his own heaven. If he will he may find the riches of character; he may enter into the paradise of a mind at peace; he may taste of the divine joys of serving his fellows; he may, in thought, commune with all the good and great; he may hear the morning stars sing together.

The eternal crown of glory is the crown of character. The streets paved with gold are the fair, clear ways of virtue. The harps of whose music we never weary are the strings of sympathy and love and pain; these make the heavenly harmony. The angels are in the faces we learn to love. These make heaven when we see them in the light of the presence of eternal love.

## XVI

Truth and Life

*Religion of a Practical Mind The Head and the Heart New Truths for New Days*

*A life is an empty lamp without the oil of love.*

*The only way to have happiness as a permanent guest is to keep your door open to the helpless.*

*Self shrinks the soul.*

*It is much easier to get interested in art doilies for Hottentots than it is to be simply human to the washerwoman at home.*

*Whoever helps us to think kindly of another aids the coming of the kingdom of heaven.*

*You are not likely to cheer the hearts of men by looking down in the mouth yourself.*

*No man climbs to the Father by treading on his brother.*

*Many things may keep you from the triumphs of life but only selfishness can keep you from the victories of love.*

*The child of heaven always sees something of heaven in the child.*

*There are too many people trying to clean up the world by scalding their neighbours.*

## RELIGION OF A PRACTICAL MIND

Is there a faith for the practically minded man and woman? Or is religion exclusively for the dreamers and those who are contented with sentiment and feeling? These people of action, who measure by results, who have no life to waste on things not evidently useful; these who feel so intensely the needs of humanity that they have no time to waste in anything other than work—is there a religion for them?

But religion is not a form of life nor a point of view for one kind of people alone; it is the spirit of higher things coming into the lives of all kinds of people. Its expression will depend on the temperament of the individual. It may lead some to sing hymns, but it will certainly compel others to build houses and to care for the sick and needy.

In a world of men and affairs no man is actually religious unless his faith is finding some practical expression, and the greatest need of our day is that our hard-headed men and women who do things shall become inspired with the spirit and ideas of religion and shall do those things which religion's spirit of love and service would indicate as needing to be done.

Pious people are deluding themselves if they think that they are cultivating the religious life and meriting the rewards of faith by simply sitting in church and feeding themselves on beautiful sentiments and thrilling visions, or even by vigorously attacking all those who dare to differ from them in matters of religious philosophy.

Nor can religion find full expression in harking back over the centuries and elucidating the mysteries of ancient miracles or tracing the history of ancient peoples.

If as much brain and energy had been given to solving the problem of society and leading men into the way of right living to-day as have been given to digging into the historical and philological problems of Scripture this world would be a better world by far. We must let the dead past bury its dead. Stay not weeping by the tomb of yesterday; do the work of to-day.

There will be much more real religion in the intelligence, care, and sacrifice applied to the problem presented by the millions coming in at the gates of our country than in the most pains-taking study of the emigration of a horde of Israelites millenniums ago. This is what the practical man feels; there is so much to be done, why waste time in dreaming of how things once were done or in wishing for a world where no need or sorrow exists? Therefore, he is apt to say, in the business of bringing things to pass religion has no place; it is only for the dreamers.

Yet no one needs religion more than the man who would do any worthy and lasting work in the world. Indeed, the possibility of such a work will not dawn upon him unless some of the spirit of religion and the possession of desire to do great and worth while things is evidence of the heavenly flame within. Any work for the sake of humanity needs a wider vision than that of its own field. Courage fails and hope dies if we see only the dismal problem; if we have only the practical outlook. Some vision of the ideal must enter into all great work; one must learn to see humanity in the light of divinity.

It is a good thing to be able to see the Divine in the commonplace, the hand of Providence in American history, the work of the Most High as recorded in the daily papers, as well as in the Gospels; to do our work whether it be laying railroad track, selling dry goods, making or teaching or trading, as part of the service necessary to bring in the better day.

Here is the religion of the practical mind, to express by the service of heart and brain and hand the belief that he has in the possibilities humanity, the hope that he has of a fairer, sweeter, nobler age than this, to make real the world's best ideals. So, seeking to bring to earth the best that heaven has dreamed, men have found themselves lifted into the light of infinite truth and love.

## THE HEAD AND THE HEART

There are temperamental types which never reach any conclusion by pure reasoning; intuitions, emotions, and inspirations take the place of intellectual processes. It would be the height of folly to attempt to make such natures reduce their religion to syllogisms, or to ask them to bring to the bar of the head all the findings of the heart.

The emotional nature does not comprehend the manner in which the average mind must wait for its own light. These souls that move by great tides often reach sublime heights. The world would be poor, indeed, without their all-compelling enthusiasms, their glorious visions, and their dominant convictions. But such ones must not forget that there is no royal road to truth; that human nature is not cast in one single, unvarying mold; diversity is not necessarily heresy.



There are other natures, not less necessary to the world, not less glorious in their records of leaders, martyrs, and masters of men. These are those that find truth by the slow steps of reasoning; that seek the way of right, with hearts of reverence and feet of faith, in the light of the faculties heaven has given them. They do not feel, they do not understand the winds that, sighing round them, convey such mighty meaning to other souls; they cannot buy progress at the price of blindness. They are the intellectual type.

The conclusion that the emotional type must, after all, be the right one is a common one. This is because it makes the most noise and the most easily apprehended demonstration. And, therefore, some tell us that the man who seeks to find the way of truth by the light of the intellect must, without fail, wander into the pit of error; that the only way to come to religious truth is to shut the eyes of the mind and yield to emotion.

The thinker constantly is being warned that he cannot apprehend God with his intellect; that he cannot see the way to heaven with the eyes of reason. He is urged to give up the use of his head that he may develop his heart. He even is told that faith is incompatible with reason, and love with logic. So strong is the emphasis on this that he is led to suspect that indolence is seeking to deify ignorance, and that men whose intellectual faculties have atrophied by their subjection to the emotional now are envious of those who retain the power to think clearly, and would have them also deprived of these powers.

Nothing could be more clearly opposed to the way of truth than the notion that religion can be bought only at the price of reason, or that the consequence of using the intelligence is the losing of the power of affection for the divine, the good, and the true—of the warmth of heart and feeling that often determine character and conduct.

If the faculties are God given they are given for working purposes. If man has a mind and yet may not think concerning the deepest and highest things of his own nature and destiny, then the giving of that mind or the permitting it to develop is the most cruel mockery known to human history.

But the simple law of nature that every faculty has some purpose, that no power is without its duty, is the answer to all this. The mind is as sacred as the heart; it is as much a sacred duty to think as it is to aspire. There is nothing too holy for men to think about, to reason about. The mind must serve the truth—must with reverence lead to larger truth.

No man is religious who represses any of his reasoning faculties. Every one of the higher powers must be brought to their greatest perfection. Not by dwarfing but by developing themselves do men glorify their Creator. Just as the finest tree in the forest speaks most eloquently of the bounty and beauty of nature, so does the gigantic intellect glorify the intelligence that ordered its being.

Fear not to think of sacred things; nothing is sacred because it is mysterious; reverence does not dwell apart from reason. Faith does not reach its perfection in the fool; it shines most glorious where wisdom dwells. There still are the superstitious souls who confound darkness with divinity; who cry aloud against the light of knowledge. But they can no more stay the discovery of truth than the bats can hold back the dawn.

## NEW TRUTHS FOR NEW DAYS

There are many who think they must live without religion because they cannot be content with the views held by their fathers. The facts on which the faith of the past was based have come into the light so that the modern man, examining them, finds himself in all honesty compelled to question them and often ultimately to call them fables.

The attempt to answer the questions of the clear-eyed modern scientific mind by accusing it of inherent antagonism to religion is cheap and ineffectual. There are honest doubters who at the same time are earnest seekers after truth, who desire the best, who are willing to pay any price for personal character and social righteousness.

It is because such men are honest that they refuse to be bound by creeds they cannot believe and to buttress beliefs they cannot indorse. No greater loss could come to character than to insist that we shall act and speak a lie in order that the body of religious teaching shall remain undisturbed. The heresy we most need to fear is that which blatantly declares one thing while at heart fearing that another is true.

The old generation in religion is accusing the new of treason to faith and the new is accusing the old of blindness to truth. When the father says to the son, "Believe this or be lost," the son answers that he

rather would be lost in company with truth and honesty of conscience than be saved at the cost of both.

But do these divergencies mean that the man of the modern mind must give up religion and that those who hold to the traditional views can find no fellowship with those who see new light? This is more than an academic question; it presses on every man who, finding in him the universal thirst for religion, finds also standing before the living waters him who says, "You can drink only out of this cup handed down from the fathers; you can approach only on speaking our shibboleth."

Our fathers looked on religious truth as something complete and unchangeable, once for all delivered to the saints. But they forgot how different was the truth, as they saw it, from its vision as given to their fathers. Every age tends to look upon itself as the final goal and on its views as the last possible statement of truth.

Yet how clearly does the past teach us that our vision of truth is ever changing. The science of to-day will be largely the folly of to-morrow. Truth, in any realm, is a country whose boundaries lie ever before us, whose geography each age must write anew. Truth is a road, not a terminus; a process of search and not the thing discovered alone.

He only is religious really who opens heart and mind to the increasing vision of truth, in whom religion is not a cut and dried, fixed and unchanging philosophy, but to whom it is a method and motive for living, a process of adjusting himself to all his world in the full light of all the truth that can come to him.

There is a religion for the man who must deny many things that once seemed essential to religion; for the man who feels compelled to doubt all things; it is the religion of the honest, open souled, unreserved search for truth and the translation of that truth as it is known into character, and living.

If the setting of the face towards truth means breaking through ancient theology it also will mean bringing us face to face with the infinite. It is a good thing to lose the symbol if we only will seek for the substance. The heart of man cries out for the reality that lies back of all our words and for the realization of our doctrines in deeds.

When the test of trouble comes, when earth is a desert and the heavens are brass, we find our refreshing, we find the real resources of religion not in doctrinal statements, not in formal creeds, but in that creed which experience has written on our hearts, in the consciousness of an eternal love not demonstrated by logic, in the sense of the unity of ourselves and our race with the infinite and divine.

Every day must have its new creed, its enlarging vision of truth, but back of all lies truth itself, the reality upon which our fathers leaned and the unfailing springs where they were refreshed and the glowing visions that led them on. In that reality lies every man's religion.

## **XVII**

### The Fruits of Faith

*Root and Fruit The Orthodox Accent The Business of Religion*

*Killing hope is moral suicide.*

*Sow happiness and reap heaven.*

*Every man is made up of many men.*

*You cannot travel towards heaven with your back turned to honour.*

*Earthly prudence is a large part of heavenly providence.*

*Homes are often closest knit about some grave of separation.*

*Your credit in heaven depends on earth's debts to you.*

*To attempt a great work is to become a great worker.*

*The practice of happiness does much for the power of holiness.*

*No man ever found this world a weary place who had a worthy work to do.*

*It's no use talking about the religion in your heart if it is not visible in your home.*

## **XVII**

### **ROOT AND FRUIT**

There is honest inquiry rather than querulous criticism in the question, often asked, Why does not religion produce a higher and stronger type of moral character? Enthusiasm for the teachings of Christ often is cooled by contact with some flabby-willed, narrow-minded professed follower of those teachings.

It is a common saying with business men that it is hard to find a man of absolute integrity, one who even measures up to the standards of commercial honour among those who are religious, either by vocation or avocation. At any rate, it is true that a certificate of religious affiliations by no means is equivalent to a guarantee of high moral worth.

Yet it is easy to arrive at wrong conclusions when judging the effect of religion on personal character as tested by daily business and living. One is in danger of judging from exceptions. We may remember as a religious person the man who makes the loudest protestations of his piety and fail to recognize the religious sources of strength in the quieter one of whose sterling qualities we need no persuasion.

When religion has little root it often springs up with a rapid self-assertive growth; but it withers even more quickly under the scorching sun of the market and business affairs. It also would be the height of folly to conclude that religion contributed nothing to a man's moral worth, because the morally worthless seek to hide their nakedness by wearing it as a cloak.

If we stop to think of the strong men and women we know, of those whose integrity is undoubted, whose character wealth constitutes the real reserve and bulwark of our business stability, we shall find that they are controlled by religious ideals and principles, that the strength and beauty which we admire in them in itself is religion.

They may have or may not have ecclesiastical affiliations; these are but incidental. They do have religion. Somehow we feel that their actions rise not from superficial wells of policy or custom but from deep springs that go back into the roots and rock of things. They look out on life with eyes that see beyond questions of immediate and passing advantage; they see visions and ideals; they are drawn on by lofty aspirations.

The recognition which we accord to real worth, to high, and noble, and strong manhood and womanhood, with the scorn we have for the canting weakling, is but part of our discrimination between a living, deep religion expressed in conduct and a mask or pretense adopted for profit or convenience.

Still there are many good people, sincere in their religious professions, who practically are no good at all when they come to some strain on conscience, or some real test in life. Is it not because in their minds religion never has been related to conduct? They are grounded on the eschatology of Christianity but not on its ethics.

It is possible to go through a full course of religious instruction in the regularly appointed agencies of many churches and to come out with clear-cut conceptions of heaven and angels, but with the most misty and even misleading conceptions of right relations among men, of honesty, and justice, and truth.

The schools teach us about the stars and the earth, about men dead and beasts living; the church teaches us of saints and seraphs, and about an ancient literature; but who shall teach us and our children the art of living, the laws of human duties? Of what value is all our knowledge unless we get the wisdom of right living?

No man is saved until he is made strong, sane, useful, and reliable. The most irreligious thing in this world is a religion that makes people think that an imputed or technical salvation absolves them from the necessity of practical salvation, the working out of the best and noblest in their lives. Religion without morality is a mockery.

Real religion is the secret and source of the highest, strongest, cleanest character. It furnishes the life with motives mightier than any considerations of advantage or profit; it ties the soul up to eternal and spiritual verities; it refreshes the heart as with living waters when life seems all desert; it sets the heart in step with the Infinite One who marches on through the ages.

## THE ORTHODOX ACCENT

Perhaps the chief damage done by the confusion of tongues at Babel was that it tended to a multiplicity of words. Whether it was so before that time or not, it is certain that ever since there has been a constant likelihood of religion and every other good thing being drowned in floods of rhetoric. Where there are ten ways of saying a thing it is so much easier to use them all than to do the thing in the one way in which it may be done. Words become the chief enemies of works. A volume containing all the words of the great Teacher would look mighty insignificant beside the ponderous tomes of the modern exponents of His teachings. That is because the minister has become the preacher.

The tendency also is for laymen to prove their piety by becoming teachers. It is so in every direction. Reforms dissipate into theses; it is always easier to make speeches on the city beautiful than it is to refrain from throwing the refuse in the street. We are all talking about what ought to be done. Perhaps some leader will arise and institute the order of the practicers.

Dreamers, philosophers, thinkers, writers have poured forth their floods upon a thirsty world. But the only words that have been worth anything to mankind have been those that have grown out of the speaker's soul as it has been molded by his living and doing.

Because talking is so easy to the knowing ones it is not strange that they should water their stock of superstitious prestige with the less knowing ones from their reservoir of words. Then it is the most natural thing for the glib man to set up the thing he can do most easily as the thing essential to salvation, and thus a shibboleth becomes the saving sign.

But salvation does not depend on any shibboleth. No man is going to fail of seeing the Most High because he cannot render the precise name by which one race chose to call Him, nor will the sun cease to shine upon him should he seek the highest good in other ways than names. The heart of the universe asks not that we be consistent with the syllogisms of the past, but that we be true to the truth we know ourselves.

Every man has some creed back of every deed; but when he puts his creed up in front his deeds soon die. Where words reign they soon reign alone, with nothing but words to serve them. Orthodoxy is so general, because it is so easy and so meaningless. Catch the accent and you are orthodox. But if heaven is to be won by an accent most honest men would rather pay board, somewhere else.

No life can be interpreted in language alone. The church is but an obscuration on Christianity when it meets only to analyze the life of its Lord and never to exemplify His deeds. What must heaven think to see a thousand able-bodied men and women gather in a beautiful building to sing hymns of praise to their Diety [Transcriber's note: Deity?] and to listen to arguments about His divinity while, within block of them, there are, in sickness and squalor, distress and sorrow, the ones to whom He sent these people to minister? The doctrines manufactured about Him have hidden the directions given by Him.

The trouble is not that we have too much doctrine so much as that we have the wrong kind. The Master's great teaching was, Do the divine things, and the divine truths will take care of themselves.

The kingdom will never come until His will is done. Half-tons of heaven will not keep people warm in winter; it is half tons of coal they need. The world will believe in any church that tries to do good. But the church does not believe in itself yet; half the people are strenuously endeavouring to fool themselves into what they call spiritual warmth. What they need is plain Christian perspiration. No man really credits his own religion until he converts it into reality.

But the man who prides himself on his heterodoxy is often equally guilty here. He ridicules the old type of piety and thinks to improve on it with new sets of phrases. All these critics have is new arrangements of words. Even the man who rejects all religion satisfies himself with the cant phrase of irreligion.

We need most of all to treat religion as sensibly as we do business, to leave the science to those interested while we give ourselves to the practice of its art, the doing of its deeds, the living its life.

## THE BUSINESS OF RELIGION

Any religion that will not stand the strain of modern business may have been good for some other age; but it is valueless in this one. The test of your piety is not peace in the pews of the church, but power and direction in the stress of the market, its adaptability to your activities as well as your meditations.

The problem of the reconciliation of business and religion is not nearly so complex as we would

believe. The people who are saying it is impossible to be upright and get on in the world mean that it is impossible to be honest and to gain all the questionable advantages on which they have set their hearts. When a man says that religion and business will not work in harmony he either has a wrong brand of piety or a false conception of business.

Religion is built for business. The only creed that is worth a moment's thought is a working creed, that is, one that gets into action. Religion is not the mere acceptance of a speculative philosophy of this and other worlds. It consists in principles, ideals, and motives which dominate conduct. It is more concerned with the kind of a world you are making here than with the conceptions you may have of a world beyond.

Religion is more than an institution; it is a course of life. It has to do with the church only in so far as the church serves its purposes. It is more concerned with what a man pays his employees than with what he puts into the plate at the collection. The man who can put all his piety into the prayer-meeting and the services of the church never has enough seriously to embarrass him under any circumstances.

If for your religion you have adopted principles of high living; if you have set the worth of the soul above all other things; if you have determined to frame your life according to the golden rule of the great Teacher, and, with Him as hero and ideal, are seeking to do good to others and make this world a better place for us all, with less of sin and sorrow and more of joy and love, you will make your business as well as your praying the servant of these ends.

But if you have said that you wish to do these things, that you wish to live the pure and beneficent life while in your heart your sole desire is to get riches, to gain fame, to secure power, then there is bound to be conflict between the religion you profess and the business that possesses you.

Everything depends on the purposes of living, on the things a man really and deep within himself sets first in his life; he will follow those things no matter what other professions he may make. Business as a servant deserves our allegiance and devotion; business as a master is the most evil and soul devastating thing in this universe.

There is the most perfect harmony; there is relatively easy settlement of problems and difficulties if but this principle be adopted; that you have taken as your chief business in life the ends of true religion, the development of character and the service of humanity, and, with this purpose, the daily toil, the opportunities and enginery of your trade or profession shall be made to serve these higher ends.

Religion then becomes the motive in business and business the manifestation of religion. A man serves the Most High in his office with the same devotion and elevation of spirit as a priest at the altar. He is doing a great work, because the spirit is great. In questions of conscience he can afford to lose everything except the great end; he will not sacrifice the lesser to the greater.

## **XVIII**

### The Force of Faith

*"The Victory that Overcometh" Fear and Faith Faith for the Future*

*Some talk so hard about duty they have no strength left for deeds.*

*When a good man gets down in the dirt some one is sure to stumble over him.*

*Many a man who would make a first-class lighthouse is wasting his life trying to be a fog-horn.*

*The mournful saint works a good deal more harm than the cheerful sinner.*

*The faith that shows up strong on the fence may fail altogether when it gets on the field.*

*It's not the man who says the loudest amen who makes the most impression on heaven.*

*There are too many folks trying to meet the world's hunger for love with essays on affection.*

*Lots of people let their daily manna spoil while they pray for butter and sugar to spread on it.*

*People who lay their sins on the old Adam are not anxious to have their successes attributed to him.*

*Many a man thinks his life is clouded over when the truth is he is burying his head in the steam of his own sighings.*

## **XVIII**

### **"THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH"**

You cannot believe little things and do great ones; you cannot believe in half successes and accomplish whole ones. A man's faith sets the boundaries of his work. He will do what he believes and accomplish what he believes can be accomplished. Mountains are not subdued by men who stand discouraged at a mole-hill. A man must conquer the fatigues of the way in his own heart or he will never set out on the road.

Back of all free action lies some creed, some conviction. All great battles have been fought and either lost or won in the heart. The simple or stubborn confidence that leads to all-conquering effort, this is faith, the vision that vitalizes. The eye of faith sees the prize at the end long before it is reached; the eye of fear looks so closely at the difficulties and dangers of the course that the prize is not seen at all.

There is a good deal of fatalism seeking to pass as faith. People say we must have faith in God; let things take their course and they will come out all right. The church long commended the slothful who let things drift, and called their laziness resignation. But faith feels the certitude of a harvest because it has first diligently plowed and sown and because of the goodness that has ever brought the seed-time and the harvest.

Superstitious credulity is not faith. It is more than the foresight that feeds on visions of a future heaven; it is the clear eye that looks keenly at the things of to-day. No truth is the better for being taken on trust; it cannot be possessed until it is known, not on the authority of another but on your own experience. No man ever became a martyr for a truth he received at second hand.

Only a first hand faith is a force in the world. It is born of life; it determines life. Your faith forms you. If you do not believe men, how can you be a man? If you do not believe in things better, nobler, purer, how can you move towards them? If at bottom your faith is in things mean, sordid, sensual, base, then thither turns your life, and no extraneous efforts, no badges, buttons, or creeds can change its course.

You can measure a man's weight in this world, by the strength and clearness of his convictions. Poor you may be, friendless, alone, weak, unlearned; but all this can be overcome if bright in the heart there burns the unquenchable flame of some great passion, some high faith. Given this fire within them, all the tools shall be found, but without it the finest endowment of brain and body is valueless.

Given but some great principle, some purpose that becomes a holy passion, something that leads you, like one of long ago who "steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem," then all power is yours. The man who has faith to remove mountains always finds the picks and the steam shovels somewhere. He takes the tools he has, though they may seem but toys beside his task, and lo! some morning when the dreamers awake the mountain is no longer there. Faith has had her perfect work.

It is faith that gives fortitude, faith that gives force. The dreamers of dreams have ever been, after all, the doers of the great deeds. Seeing the things that are not seen is the secret of doing the things that remain to be seen.

No worthier word was ever said of the divine Man than that which spoke of Him as the leader and completer of faith. So great a work was possible only with sublime confidence in the glorious possibilities of mankind, only with unshakable assurance that all that was good and true in the universe was working with Him for the good of all. With Him faith was an eye that saw man's hidden good, a hand that grasped the infinite might moving for the best.

## **FEAR AND FAITH**

To many faith simply means denying the reason and relying on emotion. They have what is called saving faith and are able to feel that the Almighty forgives their wrong-doings, ceasing to be angry with them; their faith being perfect when it takes away fear of punishment. To these faith is that which they pay in the form of credence to whatever is ecclesiastically asserted in exchange for the complaisance of diety [Transcriber's note: deity?].

Those who deny all religion assert that it is founded on fear. There is enough in that assertion to give it the colour of truth. Yet fear of the unseen is but the survival of savagery. Faith founded on fear becomes servile, debasing, superstitious. If religion has no higher motive than that of fear, the trembling and dread before some great omnipotent unknown, it can give the world neither help nor uplift.

What is there in God to fear? Is the Lord of life also the foe of our lives? Is the author of a world so fair and lovely, inviting us to joy and inspiring with feelings of pleasure, the foe of happiness? Has He made the world a paradise and planted in man's breast the seeds of kindness, gentleness and sweet thoughts only to glower over His world in hatred and to damn it with dread of Himself?

All things that can be known argue the goodness of the unknown. As soon as a man learns to live with nature he loses his fear of forest, beast, and sea. Familiarity breeds confidence, affection and reverence. Only the remote and unfamiliar fill us with dread. The city bred tremble in the woods at night, where the native feels himself amongst well loved friends.

In the same manner the fear of the divine, born of unfamiliarity, instead of being an evidence of reverence or of religion, becomes the mark of ignorance and cowardice. Rectitude of conduct, resulting wholly from regulating oneself as under an all-seeing critical eye and in dread of a far-reaching devastating hand, cannot produce enrichment of character. Hatred never gave birth to holiness.

The souls that in all ages have lived nearest to things spiritual, that have most enriched the world with thoughts, whose inner visions pierced our outer clouds, seeing something of the glory of the infinite, brought back no pictures of a face austere, of a cruel despot, or of aught for love or truth to fear.

True faith instead of being a compromise to allay our fears of unknown ills and calamities, ever has been the fearless, reverent search for the face of the infinite. It does not say: "I believe that God will let me alone because I did those prescribed things"; rather it says: "I cannot be satisfied alone and apart from Him, the source and sole satisfaction of all life."

Science with its passion for truth, art with its passion for beauty, ethics with its passion for rightness, are all but parts of true religion, the soul's passion for the infinite heart and mind in which all ideas of truth and beauty take their rise and find their full realization.

The soul of man never has ceased to cry out for the living God; the religion of fear has given it no satisfaction. Its followers have been too busy building themselves shelters from the heaven they dread, shelters that become as leaden shields shutting out the eternal tenderness and beneficence. No man ever found the celestial city or its glorious king so long as he regarded his religion as a cyclone cellar.

To those who, with eyes of reverence, seek to find the good in all things here, believing that love is better and mightier than hate, that whatever is good, kindly, tender, pure, and ennobling in us, is but the reflection from the glory of the infinite, traces in our dust by which we find our way to Him who inhabits eternity, these, through eyes of faith, have found a presence beyond description or definition.

Fear sets afar off a mighty monarch; faith finds near at hand one whom it calls "Father." Fear shrinks from the impending wrath, love rests in the unchanging goodness. Fear imagines a throne and flaming sword; faith has confidence in a better day ever dawning, in the triumph at last of right, in the reality of an incomprehensible love that sings in its joy, soothes in its sorrow, strengthens in its discipline, a life and love nearer and more real than any of the other facts of living.

## FAITH FOR THE FUTURE

You cannot tell much about a man's faith by his willingness to deal in futures without any foundation in fact. And yet no man is ready to face the future unless his heart is nerved by a high and worthy faith. This alone can give strength to look down the coming days and to take up their tasks.

None of us can know what these new days hold for us; fear readily conjures up pictures of disaster. But because of certain sublime confidences we hold we banish our fears, shake off our sloth, and gladly step out into the unknown and untrodden country of to-morrow.

Faith is the force of all the ages. It accounts for the past; it enters and determines the future. Because certain men in days gone by believed certain things intensely; because they were thrilled by great visions, by glorious ideals, history was wrought out in the forge of their convictions, under the hammer of their wills.

No great things are done except by the power of faith, under glowing hopes and compelling convictions. It is her faith in her boy's future that makes the mother willing to suffer, keeps her patient, that buoys up the father in the strife and weariness of life. No man or woman is doing anything that makes the world richer for mere bread and butter; some purpose and vision is behind the worthy work.

It is because somehow we believe, no matter how we may phrase the belief, that destiny is behind this strange weaving we call life that we are content to seem to be the shuttles jerked hither and thither. We bear the ills of to-day because we dimly see the glorious goal of the good of all. We do a full day's work only as we see somehow an eternal wage.

It makes little difference what creed a man may hold, for that has become almost wholly a matter of philosophical speculation regarding things unknown and often unimportant, but it makes all the difference what measure and quality of faith he has, whether he feels the force of great aspirations and is controlled by eternal principles.

It may belong to few of us to be heralded as heroes, and the judgment of history may confer on none the martyr's crown, but the hero's joy and the martyr's glory are in the heart of every one who boldly reaches up to and lives out the highest he conceives, for he will not do that without sacrifice and pain on his side nor without enriching for mankind on the other.

The largest faith may be manifest in the lowliest places. When all the work of the ages appears, when the weaving of the centuries is turned with its finished side towards us, we may see that the man who has laid the brick or fed the furnace or the woman who has washed and cooked in the home and tended the little ones, doing these things for love, has shot the most glowing colours into the great fabric.

It is not the thing you do so much as the spirit in which you do it that makes it great or small. Faith determines this spirit, for faith is that which fashions the ideal of the one we love, the ideal we serve and for which we joyfully suffer. The prophet whose burning words cannot forget lives by the faith in a vision broad and sweeping; but not less is the faith of the humble toiler who lives each day by the vision of his home and fireside.

Nor is this all. It is faith that draws on life's invisible sources of power and refreshing; it is faith that finds inner contact with the invisible. How empty is life if it hold nothing but things; how hungry grows the heart fed only on cold facts. For each day as it comes we need to be able to draw on the deep springs of the water of life, the springs from which our fathers drank and found strength to lay the foundations of our day.

Faith is not the blind confidence that, somehow, Providence will send us daily bread. It is the faculty by which the heart eats of the bread of heaven, by which it comes into fellowship with the great and immortal of all ages, by which it walks with Jesus of Nazareth and every spirit like His and learns to read life as love law and see it as leading to eternal good.

## **XIX**

Hindrances and Helps from Within

*Worry A Cure for the Blues The Gospel of Song*

*Airing our aches will never heal them.*

*This would be a sad world but for our sorrows.*

*A merry heart kills more microbes than any medicine.*

*It is always a pleasure to boost another sinner down.*

*We make mistakes; other people commit sins.*

*Nothing worries worry worse than work.*

*A little modesty often hides a lot of vanity.*

*He whose life leads nowhere is never late in getting there.*



*Love runs over but it never gives over.*

*Never put off to-morrow the meanness you can put off to-day.*

*Happiness rests on thoughts and not on things.*

*He who has friends only to use them has them only to lose them.*

*To-morrow's burden is the only one that breaks the back of to-day.*

## **XIX**

### **WORRY**

Worry is wicked because it causes weakness. It robs the life of its powers; it thwarts our possibilities. Anxiety is wrong, not because it indicates infidelity as to the wise and loving providence overruling life, but because it is a criminal waste of life's forces, it prevents our doing our own work, and it irritates and hinders others.

What a great cloud would be lifted from our world if all the needless fears and frowns were chased away. One scowling man, going to his work worrying over it, will spread the contagion of apprehension and cowardly fretfulness through almost every group with which he mingles. Our mental health has as much to do with our success and happiness as any other thing.

The fog that bothers us most of all is that we carry on our faces, that which rises from our heart fears. Once savage man lived in perpetual fear of innumerable malignant spirits; civilized man lives in fear of invisible and imaginary accidents. For every real foe that has to be faced we fight out hypothetical battles with a dozen shadows.

Worry is a matter of outlook and habit. It depends, first of all, on whether you are going to take all the facts into account and look on life as a whole, or see only the dismal possibilities. Then it depends on whether you will yield continually to the blue moods that may arise from apprehension or from indigestion until you have become colour blind to all but the blue things.

How trivial are the things over which we worry, by means of which we cultivate the enslaving habit of worry, whether we will catch the approaching car or the one that will come two minutes later, whether it will rain when we want it to shine, or shine when we want it to rain.

How ineffective it all is. Whoever by worrying all night succeeded in bringing about the kind of weather he wanted? More than that, it is fatal to successfully accomplishing those things that do lie within our power. The worry over catching a train or doing a piece of work so agitates the mind and unsettles the will that it reduces the chances of efficiency.

But there are larger causes of worry than these, sickness, loss, impending disasters. Yet how futile to help and how potent to increase these ills is worry. The darkest days and the deepest sorrows need that we should be at our best to meet them. To yield to fear and fretting is to turn the powers of heart and brain from allies to enemies.

No occasion is so great or so small that we can afford to meet it either with fear or without forethought. The imperative obligation to make the most of our lives is not met by apprehending the worst, but by doing the best we can. We have no right to give to forebodings the time and force we need for preparing for and actually meeting our duties.

The best cure for worry is work. In the larger number of instances if we but do our work well we shall have no need to worry over the results. Much of our fearful fretting is but a confession of work illy done and the apprehension of deserved consequences.

Then faithful work by absorbing the thought and energies cures the habit of worry. It is the empty mind that falls first prey to foreboding, and is most easily filled with the spectres of woe. Do your work with all your might; let it go at that, knowing that no amount of further thought can affect the issue of it.

No matter how dark the way, how empty the scrip, the cheerful heart has sunshine and feasting. And this not by a blind indifference, a childish optimism, but by the blessed faculty of finding the riches that are by every wayside, of catching at all the good there is in living. If you would dispel your gloom and depreciate your burdens, begin to appreciate your blessings. Do your best, seek out the best, believe in the best, and the best shall be.

## A CURE FOR THE BLUES

There is an honest confession, and one that proved to be good for the soul of the man who made it, in the Seventy-seventh Psalm. Asaph, the singer of that song, had had a bad spell of the blues. He was nervous, sleepless, fretful, full of vague regrets and querulous complainings. He had reviewed the whole troop of his imaginary miseries, and wound up by wondering whether God really cared anything about him. One might well believe that he had been taking in altogether too many social functions. Whatever the cause, he had come to an exceedingly disagreeable condition.

Despite the fact that many suppose that saintliness is never fully achieved unless the whole nature be soured, it still remains true that of all the blights upon this earth, few are more contrary to the will of a God of love and sunshine than the disposition that abides in the chronic blues. It lives on regrets for the good things that might have been and dreadings of the evil things that yet may be. It is either complaining or criticising.

Their gall enters the hearts of such people. They who look within and see nothing but bitterness, when they look without find a film over their eyes that colours their whole world, until they lose faith in God and hope for man. Then they lay the blame on their circumstances, or, worse yet, on what they call an "All Wise Providence," whom they imagine to be as bitter against them as they are against the world.

This attitude soon becomes fixed. Unconsciously it is cultivated. Then friends and members of the family turn with loathing from the atmosphere of chronic pessimism; the habitué has become a cuttlefish among his fellows, only emanating floods of inky misery. He wonders why things do not come his way; why business associates desert him and troubles assail him more and more. The truth is that imaginary troubles tend to become real, and fortune never smiles on a man who turns a sour face towards her.

Character is contagious. Even if we had the right to enjoy our own misery we have no right to infect our neighbours with it. You are bound by social obligations as well as by selfish reasons to cure the blues every time you have them.

And there is a remedy. Asaph began to cure himself when, instead of saying, "All things are against me," he said, "This is my infirmity," my fault; I am enough to turn a beehive sour. His cure was almost perfect when he said, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." The cure for the blues is simple, then. First, own up to it that the largest part of your miseries comes out of your own mind, out of your distorted views of things. Then begin to thank God for His goodness, call to mind the many things for which you should be grateful.

To remember our mercies is to bury our miseries. There is a lot of good in this old world and they get it who go for it. There is something good in every man; the best people find the best in people. After all, our lives are determined not by the things about us but by the things we invite into us. It is impossible to keep that man blue who persistently looks for the bright side of things, or to keep him poor or sad who is affording a welcome to every good thing, every happy, cheering thought. Soon the man who lives like that gets so busy keeping track of his own and other people's happiness that he forgets to think whether he is happy or not, just as a healthy man forgets to count his pulse or his respirations. So, if you are tempted to feel blue, remember it is a sin to nurse your sadness; it is a duty to cultivate happiness.

## THE GOSPEL OF SONG

Singing cures sighing. Lift up a note of praise and you can raise the heaviest off and roll it clean off the heart. Christianity is a religion of song. Its forerunner, Judaism, left the ages the rich legacy of the Psalms. Its founder, when he knew that death was imminent, sang one of those ancient songs with his friends. His followers early gathered for worship in song. Peter beguiled prison hours with hymns. Meeting in the catacombs, the early Christians made the galleries echo with their praise.

To-day every revival is but a wave of song. The successful churches know the inspirational and the ethical power of good hymns. The decline of many a church may be traced to the exclusion of the people from their share in the worship, to the attempt to praise God by proxy, or to substitute an artistic exhibition for an act of exaltation.

Not only in public worship, but in private life, hymns and songs have a significant influence. It is always easy to remember rhymed forms of truth; happy the heart with a store of good hymns; it is provisioned for many a long voyage. When the light burns low the heart is illumined by the memory of

choice thoughts expressed in poetry, by songs sung long ago. When the burden seems all too heavy, and the traveller would fain lie down in despair, he remembers some word of cheer, some stanza from another pilgrim's song, and he is strengthened for the road.

Christianity is a singing religion, because it is a happy religion. It came to end the gloom of this world. The song must take the place of the sigh. Happiness must rule the utterance. Even a hearty whistle may be a wonderful means of grace. Every natural expression of happiness becomes a religious act. The flowers praise the gardener by being beautiful and fragrant, and men praise God by being happy.

Song is a creator of happiness. You cannot sing songs of joy and nourish jealousy or hatred. A song of gratitude for things you have will often chase away the clouds of gloom over those you dread. It is a sin to be sad when you might as well be glad, and it is a sin to be silent when you might as well be singing.

One song may surpass many a sermon in its power over a life. Great songs have sung men into battle and stiffened their melting hearts. Great songs have touched our clay and thrilled it to the divinely heroic. Songs sung in the stillness of the evening over the baby's cradle have ever been the mother's consecration for all her sacrifice. Hymns bring back hallowed memories; a strain of song will touch a chord no syllogism could sound; the simple words of an old hymn bring comfort and new hope to hearts broken and crushed.

We may not all make sermons, but we can all sing songs. To make the good singer there is needed not the artist but the heart. Sing away the gloom; sing in the gratitude, the joy, and love, and strength; sing in the courage, the aspiration and hope. Men may reject our sermons, but they will rejoice in our songs, for they are theirs also. The creeds change, but the old hymns stand.

Store your memory with the songs that time has tried. The thoughts that were meat and strength to others shall be your bread in desert days, your light in darkness. Praise God by a life of happy praise.

## XX

Does He Care?

*The One at The Helm The Shepherd and The Sheep The Father's Care*

*Faith's fervour is more than effervescence.*

*The lights of the world are not advertising signs.*

*Sow the sand and you reap only cinders in your eyes.*

*No man ever broke his back under his brother's burden.*

*The fear of reputation is often taken for the love of righteousness.*

*You cannot cure your sorrows by taking them out in a wheel chair.*

*A niggardly purse in the pocket becomes a thorn in the side.*

*Tears over yesterday's broken toys blind us to today's treasures.*

*Things do not prove themselves sacred by segregating themselves from secular concerns.*

*Heaven intrusts no great cargo to the vessel that spreads its sails to every wind that blows.*

*When a man is getting fat out of the fall of others he is sure to be a warm advocate of their right to be free to fall.*

*Many a man will be surprised when he gets to heaven to find how large a place his little kindly deeds occupy in its history.*

## XX

## THE ONE AT THE HELM

Danger tears away our disguises. In hours of peril the true man appears, and at such times, if ever, the man speaks the truth. Fearing the boat was sinking, the disciples had little thought of the dignity or the divinity of the one who lay asleep in the helmsman's place. Rudely they awaken Him with their indignant cries, wondering why one who had spoken such wondrous words before seems indifferent now to their danger. "Carest Thou not that we perish?" they cry.

Every man who has been accustomed to take God for granted has used almost the same words at some time in his life. The hour of tempest, when the uncontrollable waves of trouble and winds of adversity seemed ready to overwhelm him, when he had done all that mortal might do, then it seemed as though this God to whom he had prayed so often, of whom he had learned to think as part of his life, was absent or indifferent.

It is the question of every soul in sorrow or testing, "Does God care anything about me?" It is more than a speculative inquiry then. Theologians may have drawn up their specifications of the Most High, and, in the peaceful ways of their lives, they may be satisfied with their handiwork. But when, even into their cloistered walks, some great sorrow or grim death has come stalking, then, with dry lips and moist brow they cry, "Master, are you asleep? Do you not care?"

What is there at the helm of this great ship of life? Is there any one or is it steered automatically, blindly holding its way and heeding neither waves nor rocks nor other craft? Has this universe a heart or only an engine at its centre? The inquiry becomes pressing and pertinent, indeed, when inexplicable distress and anguish that seem all unnecessary break down all the man's strength and courage.

A man can no more content himself with a far off being, sitting in the heavens in royal state, winning reverence by remoteness, than his own children would be satisfied to know him only as a sovereign. He craves the friendship of that one; he longs for compassion, sympathy, assistance such as friend gives to friend; in a word, he looks for love. You cannot love an absentee God any more than you can love an abstraction or a theory.

But the need of one who will come close into our lives, who aids in the hour of extremity, does not meet itself. The fact remains that often we seem to be left to the mercy of the tempest; the elements do their worst and no hand is lifted and no voice is heard that still the waves. Full often the storm seems to finish its work and only clinging to the wreckage or swept on the waves do we come into port.

Is there any answer to the great question, Does any greater one care for our lives? If we are looking for an answer as susceptible to demonstration as a mathematical proposition we are doomed to disappointment. It is possible to believe in providence without being able either to prove or fully comprehend it. The child must become the parent before he can understand the ways of the father or mother with him; yet he can know their love before he can comprehend their ways.

Nothing could do more harm than to have the absolute assurance that an almighty friend would fly to our aid and protection in every time of danger or need. A friend whose power relieved us from the necessity of prudence or courage or endeavour would be a foe indeed. The All Wise loves man too well and too wisely to make plain always His ways of caring for him and His purposes of protection.

The furrowed faces and whitened heads of men may be the will of love as truly as the smooth ways of ease and complacency. There is one at the helm, but His concern is more for the making of strong sailors than for the securing of smooth sailing. The best evidence of the care of the Most High for all the sons of men is not in the immediate unbaring of His arm for their protection, but rather in the manner in which He causes the wind and the waves, the struggle with the tempest, the need for the nerving of the soul in the hour of peril all to work out His will, the will of great love, the bringing of the mariner to His likeness in character and soul.

## THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP

Millions have lived and died in faith in that word, The Lord is my Shepherd; nations have sung its strain into the strength of their being. The picture of the one who leads His flock, who carries the lambs in His arms, appeals to all; yet who has not some time, perhaps often, questioned: After all, is there any one who cares; is there any eye to see or heart to heed if I—or, indeed, all men—should faint or fall by the way?

Perhaps there are some who no longer find aught beyond an imagery of poetic beauty in the old strain, who even feel that it would be retreating intellectually to conceive of an infinite heart that broods over men or a hand that helps. They tell us that science has wiped out the possibility of such an

one as this great Shepherd of the flock of humanity. Yet even they are not dead to this great thought that so long stirred men's souls and made them brave, ready to sacrifice, to die.

The truth is, the singer of long ago was but giving expression, in figures familiar to him, of a truth we all apprehend with greater or less clearness, one that alone gives strength, hope, and faith to our hearts, the conviction that back of all the warring purposes and jangling discords of our lives and our world there is reason, and order, and beneficence.

The science that seemed to wipe out the conception of a mighty Creator who fashioned the first man with His fingers, but emphasizes with a stress that grows from day to day the fact that this universe is not without order, its forces as sheep without a shepherd; that the stars are not wandering, nor the least atom without guidance; that, as one put it long ago, all things work together for good.

If the remotest particle of matter is bound up with the mighty laws of the universe, guided, governed, led to its appointed end, bound to serve its purpose, shall we not have faith that the law that guides the atom and holds the planet, pervades all the universe and takes us in its mighty grasp?

Not with doubt but with larger meaning and deeper assurance may I sing, "The Lord is my shepherd," thinking not only of one who takes up my little life and carries it, but of the great fact of all life under law, law divine, all pervading, moving in majesty on to the completion of its purposes. I may not know what the Shepherd looks like; I may have lost my old simple pictures of personality and appearance; the larger fact grows too great for fixed words.

This is to see the guidance of the Shepherd in the great things of our world as well as in the little. It is a strange, a poor religion that believes that providence will send a man his dinner but never gives a thought to the great purposes working out through all the strife of our common life, through our industrial, social, and political problems, nor remembers that life is more than meals or millinery.

There is the large faith which we need for all times, to believe that a plan is being wrought out behind all the seeming chaos, that there is a purpose even though we cannot yet trace its lines, to be willing to go on doing our work, laying down our lives, because the great world needs us; the Shepherd cannot bring His flock to the green pastures and the still waters unless we live and labour and die.

There is only one solution to all the mystery of our lives, the riddle of history and the universe; it is the spirit solution, that we are but the offspring, as all things are but the creation of Spiritual forces; that we are working out spiritual destinies, the green pastures and the still waters are but emblems of felicities and beauties beyond our tongue, the full orb'd glory of the soul to which the Shepherd leads by toilsome mountain ways or dreary desert trails; but at last we come to the house of the Lord, where we may dwell forever.

## THE FATHER'S CARE

Formal creeds have little to say of the belief in the overruling care of the All Father. Perhaps the belief is so nearly universal as to be without the range of debate so dear to creed makers. Yet at all times, in all lands, man, whether the savage, the oriental mystic, or the cool-headed Christian, in various ways and with different phrases, has recognized the hand that, from behind the scenes, touched his affairs and often seemed to order his life. Whether it be the hand of force or of friend, the fact has been felt.

True, the laziest man is apt to have the readiest sense of the intention of Providence to care for him, to send him bread well buttered; the foolish and thoughtless depend on heaven to do their thinking, and many court bankruptcy while praying for solvency. But the improvidence of man does not disprove the providence of God. So far from encouraging sloth and recklessness this truth provokes to progress by the assurance of the coöperation of infinite powers with our best endeavours.

It is a thought we cannot escape; the all wise must be the all loving. The spirit at the centre of all must embrace all within the circle of his love; and that love will not lie quiescent, helpless when its objects are in distress, in perplexity, or need, when it might succour, save, or suggest the way of success. If there is a heart of love there is a hand of help.

Yet it seems too great a thought. What are we but dust on the wheels of the universe? Often do our fainting hearts question whether there be any, outside our own little circle, who care whether we suffer, whether we succeed. Can it be that the petty affairs of a life that passes like the hoar frost before the morning sun can even interest, still less call forth the aid, of the one in whom we all live and move and have our being?

Despite all questionings men will ever go on praying to that one; they will turn to an ear that hears,

they will seek a heart that feels, and look for hands reached out in hours of necessity. Experience indorses their faith. Nearly all can look back and see where destiny has seemed to breathe upon them; their old plans wilted, and new ones, and new ways sprung up, bearing other and fairer flowers than they had ever dreamed; a mighty, mysterious power had intervened.

What does it all mean? That we are but puppets in these strange unseen hands; that we can neither will nor work for ourselves? No; it but means what poets sang long ago when, seeking after that which far transcends all thought and all imagery, they cried, "Surely Thou art our Father." That which was best in them, the holy fire of fatherhood, became a mirror in which they saw the infinite.

From the source of all life, humanity has learned the great lessons of family care and provision. All that is good in our families is true of this great family of all mankind. The great purpose of this family, as of all families, is the development of the highest, fullest life in its members. Fatherhood regards the provision of food, clothing, and shelter but as incidental to the great purpose of training the children.

This is the purpose of the Father of us all, to develop the best in us. When our weak hearts cry for ease, for rest, for pleasures, He sends the task, the sorrow, the loss. When we think all life's lessons well learned He sends us up to higher grades with harder tasks. Yet ever over all is the pitying, compassionate yearning of a father's heart that never forgets the weakness of the child.

Wisely the father's love seems to hide its working. Like all things deep and sublime it passes comprehension; it may often seem like indifference. All the child can do is to bend every effort to do his best, to work out the father's plan so far as he knows it, to know, through all, that God is good. Then, when the child grows to the man, the man towards the divine, the things that seemed strange are made plain in the light of the Father's face.

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