

they were capable of a magnificent venture.

But faith has its heroes, as well as life. Religion is always bidding us leave the seen for the unseen, the known for the unknown. Take, for example, our belief in God's goodness. Such a faith is no doubt a reasonable one. The presence in our world of sunshine and laughter, of warmth and joy, of purity and love, make it easy for us to believe that our "veiled God" has a heart of kindness.

But there are other facts which tempt us at times to think darkly of Him. The cold, the night, nature red in tooth and claw, the sufferings of the innocent, the death of little children, fill us with perplexities. In the presence of such facts there is but one course open to the religious soul. He must make his venture. He must act on the assumption that the best he can conceive of God is true, that the ideal is real. But once the venture has been made, once we begin to trust God where we cannot trace Him, a quiet certainty settles down upon the soul, until at last there is nothing of which we are surer than that God's tender mercies are over *all* His works. Our venture has been justified.

Or consider our faith in goodness itself. It is not always easy to believe in the worth of right. There are times in life when a choice has to be made between ignoble gain

on the one hand and "God and the glory" on the other. But the earthly gain is so real, so tangible, so evident, that we are apt to lose sight of the greater gain of the morally ideal. A man,—and a good man too—once walked the streets for two days, and agonized through two sleepless nights before he decided to face what seemed almost certain poverty for himself and his loved ones rather than be guilty of a piece of trickery which an unscrupulous employer demanded of him on pain of dismissal. He did not find it easy.

But the heroes of God do not hesitate. They make their venture. They sacrifice all, if need be, for goodness, knowing that, somehow, some time, their faith in goodness will be vindicated. And it always is vindicated. We look back to the martyrdoms of the church, not as dark blots upon the pages of history, but rather as bright and glorious proofs of the worth of the ideal. When they were taking Savonarola to the marketplace to burn him, he said, "I count it nothing. Darkness encompasseth me, but the light I saw was the true light." Those who have never made a venture for goodness may talk cynically about its worth, but those who, like Savonarola, have dared all for it, never feel that the price they have paid is too great.

Ottawa

## THE TESTING YEARS

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In God's great plan for the development of human life, certain years are set aside which are designed to be the testing years of life. These are the years of adolescence, or that period of life which marks the transition of the boy or girl from childhood to maturity.

As children, boys and girls are largely free from responsibility and care. Food, clothing, home, instruction, in fact practically everything that goes into their lives at this time is put there by parents, teachers, or other adults who may be working with them. They are subject to authority, amenable to discipline and believe implicitly all that is told them. They ask questions only that

their insatiable appetite for information may be appeased and not that they doubt the truth of statements made to them. They are trustful and confiding.

With the approach of adolescence, the child is swept completely away from his old moorings. Into this life have come, suddenly, the tremendous powers that make for manhood and womanhood; overnight, as it were, the *child* has passed forever from your home and from the Sunday School class. You are now dealing with manhood and womanhood in the making.

The youth is now trying to adjust himself to this new life. All is chaos. He is con-