

SAVE YOUR LIVES.

IN a double sense, the Son of Man came "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Life is a complex possession: it has many sides and myriad possibilities. Most men hope to save their *souls*; but how many are content to lose their *lives*! Those solemn words of Christ, in Matthew xvi. 25, 26, might be differently rendered. The same word in the original means soul or life, and in the revised version is uniformly rendered *life*. Thus understood the whole passage is fraught with new meaning. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the world and lose his life, or what shall he give in exchange for a lost life, to buy it back?

Isaiah says, "I am the Lord that teacheth thee to profit." There is something, besides the soul, to be saved, something infinitely worth saving: it is the complex thing we call *life*. Once lost it is hopelessly lost, and for that loss no supposed gain could compensate. In the parallel passage in Luke we read, "and lose or forfeit *Himself*."

A grave question is that—*How may I save my life?*

It is plain that to save life we must learn first of all to *prize it*—to reckon it at its true value. It includes the whole variety of our powers, of body, mind, heart, conscience, will. We are so constituted that it is possible to promote one part of our being to a false disproportionate prominence, to seek and get a certain gain at the price of loss in other directions. The mind may be cultivated at the expense of the heart. Intellect may absorb energy that ought to be distributed over the whole man. We may do thinking at the expense of loving. We may store the memory with facts and fancies, while the heart is left empty and void. Brilliant thinkers are sometimes cold icebergs—it is the brilliance of ice. The body may be trained and developed at the expense of the spiritual nature: an athlete may be a giant in muscle and strength and as weak as Sampson was, in the arms of a seductive vice, and too feeble to hold his own passions under control. We need a large view of life and of manhood. Development must be proportionate, to be equal and symmetrical. And therefore upon the compass and comprehensiveness of our conception of life will depend primarily whether we save or lose it. If life be to us mere existence, then we may save it