

## Cheerfulness

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It is good to carry sunshine with us, to bring gladness and cheer into the darkest gloom.

The determination to be kind and helpful to everyone, to be cheerful and optimistic, no matter what comes, is one of the noblest of ambitions.

Happiness is a question of heart and not money. It is mind and cheer, not riches that make the joy of living.

There are many people who are not rich as the world regards riches, and yet that manage to hold on to the secret of sunshine and joy.

Cheerfulness is a habit. So is gloominess, and it is just as easy to acquire one as the other. We should acquire the habit of thinking good, pure thoughts. As a man thinketh, so is he. We are coming to know that thought-force is what makes us as we are, and that we can come to be anything we choose by thinking that thing. You know if others tell us we look ill, we begin at once to think we are, and by the time a few more pessimistic people make remarks about us in this way we really do feel ill, and in a short time we can imagine ourselves having more ailments than a really sick person could live through. This thought-force is mightier than any medicine, any doctor, any outward influence whatever.

A patient about to undergo a serious operation stands a better chance of regaining his lost health if he is cheerful and optimistic, than one who dwells on the pain he is about to endure and who figures out what it feels like to die in agony.

We should try and cultivate the habit of looking on the sunny side. It may be hard at first, but if we try we shall succeed. Most of the things we worry about never really happen. If they do, then a healthy, cheerful, strong mind will carry us through the time of trial, as a mind weakened by morbidness, depression and worry could not. Cheerfulness always strengthens bravery.

Many people live as in a mist. They do not seem to be able to penetrate the darkness or to see the silver lining in the clouds.

Keeping cheerful is a habit of the soul. It is not learned lightly by many means of us, but it may be. It ought to be maintained and persisted in even when life is doing its worst for us. Some of the sweetest characters we have known have had some time in their past to drink most deeply of the cup of sorrow and affliction. Ella Wheeler Wilcox well says:

"It is easy enough to be pleasant  
When life flows by with a song;  
But the man worth while is the one who  
will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong;  
For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with the years;  
And the smile that is worth the pangs  
of earth  
Is the smile that shines through tears."

## A Timely Present

The little maid gazed thoughtfully at her father. "Papa," she said, "do you know what I'm going to give you for your birthday when it comes?" "No, dear," he answered. "But tell me." "A nice new china shaving mug, with gold flowers on it all around," said the little maid. "But, my dear," explained her parent, "papa has a nice one, just like that, already." "No, he hasn't," his little daughter answered, thoughtfully, "cos—'cos—I've just dropped it!"—*Newark Star.*



## Life Talks With Young Men

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES



"THERE can be no such thing as abstract religion," I heard a man express these words the other day and I have been thinking about them since. I was just wondering how much they will make you think when you read this. We hear a good many things that are better forgotten, but every once in a while, indeed more often than we imagine, we come in contact with thoughts that are worth remembering, and then we cannot do better than live with them until they become part of ourselves.

"There can be no such thing as abstract religion." That is not a very long sentence; only nine words, and yet it enunciates a principle that is the very essence of life and growth. Religion is not an abstract quality. It is a concrete force. If it is not that it is a sham. Concrete, that applies to something that actually exists, something that can be seen, that can feel.

Neither is Christianity negative. It is supremely positive. The old law said: "Thou shalt not." Christ's law says: "Love thy neighbor." "This do and thou shalt live." "Feed my lambs." It is all doing. And at the last we shall be judged according as we have done or left undone.

We are living in an age of strength. Never was strength of all kinds so much admired as to-day, physical strength, strength of mind, strength of character and life. The religion of Christ is nothing if it is not strong and virile. There is no note of weakness in the teachings. There is in them a call to nobility of heart and life, to rugged strength of mind and body. He would not take you out of the world. He puts you into the world; throws you into the thickest of the fight and says "There, bismillah, in any realm that you cannot take up and throw into it the life and strength of Christian character. Every question throbbing in the minds of men to-day is at the bottom a religious question; all of them have to deal with the rights of men. Jesus taught a religion leading to strength, strength to grapple with every human problem and solve it in the interests of humanity.

Study the life of Christ, there is nothing negative or abstract about it. Neither should there be about ours if we have the right brand of religion. And it is not difficult to know it we have it. In the commodities of every day life you know when you have the right thing, because it bears a certain brand, whether it be a hat, a pair of boots, or a yard of woollens. If your religion is backed by the life and personality of Christ you know you have the right brand, and it is neither abstract nor negative.

Well, what about it? If you have gotten well hold of the thought it is not necessary for me to say much more. It will make you think as it made me think—in the night, on the street, at your work, alike in your busy and your quiet moments. Is your religion finding expression in concrete acts of love and service? Is it? You know.

As I have been writing a thought has come to me, and I am going to let you have it. Perhaps it may help you. It may not be a new one, but it is practical and true. I suppose I have read and heard some time and it has stuck. Perhaps it will stick to you. Here it is: The most striking feature of Christianity is its timeliness, its adaptiveness to the changing conditions of life. Being a

Christian in its inner significance is the same from century to century, but in its outward expression the Christian life means a very different thing from age to age.

Christianity to-day may find a different expression from that which it did ten years ago or twenty years ago. Why? Because conditions are changing, opportunities for practical Christianity have widened and multiplied. It is the same Christianity, but it is fitted to meet every condition.

We ought to find that a comforting thought. We have not got to have special conditions and circumstances to practise concrete or practical Christianity. Just right where you are is the place. Do you ever think of Christ's words "She hath done what she could"? What a commendation! Is your religion concrete?

Sometimes we feel that we cannot do very much. That feeling often comes from a disinclination to believe. Every day is full of opportunities; crowded with them. Look around and see.

I know a motorman; I cannot tell you his name, but I like to ride on his car, for at his work out of the fulness of his heart he whistles hymn after hymn, and it has helped me. His "good morning" is always sunny and taal helps, too. I know that man is a Christian. He never told me. He didn't have to. I could see it and feel it. He does what he can.

I know a young man in a wholesale house. He is straight. He is clean. Everyone likes him. Every body loves him and in him. He is a Christian. I never heard him say so, but it is showing in his life. He is working it out every day right where he is. He does what he can.

I know a politician. He has lost elections, but he has got his manhood. He is a Christian. His religion means something to him and to those around him. It is finding expression in ways that count. It is concrete and positive. He is a force for good. He does what he can.

I know a merchant. I don't have to ask that man if it is possible to be in business and be a Christian. I would hurt him if I did. Of course it is possible. He is proving it every day and the people around him know it right in his own town, right in his own store, right where he is. He does what he can.

David Livingstone did what he could. General Gordon did what he could, so did Abe Lincoln, Gladstone and Shaftesbury. These men, perhaps, had greater opportunities for service, for larger service than the motorman, the politician, and the merchant; perhaps they have greater capacity. Yet I believe that when God looks at the life of Livingstone he will say: "He hath done what he could," and when He looks at the life of the motorman He will say "He hath done what he could." As He looks at your life what will He say? You know. God knows. None other can judge.

Religion is not having a creed that you can sign your name to. It is having a life on which God can stamp "Well done." Not "What have I believed," but "What have I lived?" is the supreme test. True religion cannot be anything else but concrete and positive. It is summed up in his "Greatest Thing in the World," says: "By what we have done we are judged. It could not be otherwise, for the withholding of love is the negation of the spirit of Christ."