

LIVING WITHOUT WORRY.

ONE meets few unworried people. Most faces bear lines of care. Men go anxious to their day's duties, rush through the hours with feverish speed, and bring hot brain and tumultuous pulse home at night for restless, unrefreshing sleep. This is not only a most unsatisfactory, but is also a most costly mode of living.

The other night the train lost two hours in running less than a hundred miles. "We have a hot box," was the polite conductor's reply to an impatient passenger who asked to know the cause of the long delays at stations.

This hot-box trouble is not altogether unknown in human life. There are many people who move swiftly enough, and with sufficient energy, but who grow feverish, and who are thus impeded in their progress. A great many failures in life must be charged to worrying. When a man worries he is impeded in several ways. For one thing, he loses his head. He cannot think clearly. His brain is feverish, and will not act at its best. His mind becomes confused, and his decisions are not to be depended upon. The result is that a worried man never does his work as well as he should do it, or as he could do it if he were free from worry. He is apt to make mistakes.

Worry exhausts vitality. True, all good in life costs. Virtue goes out of us in everything we do that is worth doing. But for normal, healthy action nature provides. There is recuperative energy enough to supply the waste. The fountains are filled as fast as they are drained. The fibre is renewed as fast as it is worn away. Worry, however, is abnormal and unhealthy. It exhausts vitality more rapidly than nature can reinforce it. It is like friction in machinery, and grinds away the very fibre of the life. Worry, therefore, both impedes progress and makes work unduly costly and exhausting. One neither accomplishes so much nor does it so well, while the outlay of vitality is greater.

The ideal theory of life is, therefore, work without worry. At least, this certainly ought to be the ideal for a Christian. We have an express command not to be anxious about anything. Our whole duty is to do the will of God, and leave in His hands the outworking of circumstances, the shaping and overruling of all the complicated network of influences so as to bring about the right results.

The working plan for a Christian life is clearly laid down in our Lord's words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

This ideal leaves no place whatever for worry. It requires single-hearted devotion to the interests of Christ's kingdom, the elimination of self and self-seeking, uncompromising loyalty to the principles of righteousness, and the faithful and energetic doing of duty,—all duty, without regard to pleasure or cost. This is all the human part. Then God will look after the outcome, will take care of us and of the results of our acts. It is the function of faith, when we have done what we can, to put all into the Divine hands, giving ourselves no anxiety, while we go forward in peace and confidence to the next duty that waits.

It is said of a Christian man, who has risen from a humble station to great national prominence, that his motto has always been, "Do the very best you can, and leave the rest to Providence." This is nothing more nor less than the putting into plain, crisp, Saxon, our Lord's coun-

sel already quoted. If we would all get this bit of practical heavenly wisdom out of our New Testament and into our daily life, it would not only greatly increase our working capacity, and consequently make us more successful, but it would also largely enhance our happiness.

We must notice, however, that this is not a labor-saving ideal for life. It is not a theory for an indolent man. It implies the putting of all life's skill and energy into every piece of work we perform; we are to do always the very best we can. We should train ourselves to bring all our wisdom and all our power even to the smallest tasks. We should learn to decide promptly, and always according to the best light we can get at the moment from all our experience and all our knowledge of the subject, and then to act swiftly, energetically, and with all the skill we can command. When we have so acted, the matter is out of our hands, and should be left to the Divine outworking, without a misgiving or an anxious thought. We have done our best in the circumstances, and we know that is all we are ever required to do.

But may we not sometimes decide unwisely? Even with our best and ripest wisdom, may we not make mistakes of judgment? Certainly we may. But even when it appears afterward that our decision was not the wisest that might have been made, we should still refuse to worry over it. We did the best we knew, and that is as far as our responsibility goes. We could have done no better in the circumstances, with our light. We have a right to believe that He who orders all events will use even our mistake, overruling it in some way for good, if we but leave it in His hands.

Then why should we worry about that which we cannot change, since it has passed beyond our control? We ought to regret our sins and the mistakes that come from our own follies, though even in such cases we should not waste time in tears which ought to be given to amendment. But when we have done our best, with prayer and holy purpose, we have no right to fret and vex ourselves. Perhaps what seems to us to have been unwise was, after all, God's truer wisdom setting ours aside.

So there really is no place in a true, earnest Christian life for worry. Do your very best in the circumstances, and leave the rest with God. We should aim only to be faithful in duty, and then be at peace, whatever may come. We should work without worrying.

But this is one of those great life lessons which must be *learned*. It never comes naturally. The capacity for learning it, and the needful help, are given, but we must learn the lesson ourselves, just as we learn other lessons. The process must always be slow; no one can in a single day learn to live and work without worry. Usually it requires years. Yet, much can be accomplished by every one who is willing to endure the necessary discipline. We must first accept the truths of the Gospel on which the lesson rests, and must believe them,—that duty alone is ours, and that results and outworkings are God's. Then we must begin firmly and heroically to practise the lesson, to live by it, to train ourselves to confident, peaceful living.

The lesson is well worth learning, at whatever cost. To live nobly, energetically, up to one's best, and yet without worry, is one of the highest attainments possible. It is the ideal life. It is the life whose vision of beauty is pictured for us in the peace which our Lord promises His people, the peace that passeth all understanding, that keeps the heart and mind in Christ Jesus,—the perfect peace that comes to him whose mind is stayed on God. —S. S. Times.