

a man who can take these words in their full and literal signification, and find in them nothing exaggerated or unnatural, may be said to possess the true philosophy of life.

I do not know that we have ever placed sufficient emphasis upon the duty of thanksgiving, or that we have observed with sufficient care what an important place it occupies in the Scriptures of God. The Bible begins with the Psalm of the first creation, and ends with the Psalm of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. All that goes between—the murmuring, the rebellion, the sin—is but a long parenthesis. The normal attitude of man, in virtue of the constitution of his being, is one of ceaseless praise to the Father who is in heaven. You have watched the birds singing. You have seen the throat of the little warblers almost ready to burst with the suppressed tide of harmony. You do not imagine that the birds force themselves to sing from a sense of duty, or that they sing because they have been instructed to do so. Such suppositions sound ridiculous when we are speaking of the songs of birds. They do not always seem to sound so ridiculous when we are speaking of the songs of men. And yet should we pierce the sky with less ardent praise than the songsters of the grove? Not a sparrow falleth but the Father knows; and ye are of more value than many sparrows. Why should we sometimes have to force ourselves to praise God, or praise Him simply from an irksome sense of duty, or praise Him because some one has told us to do so? True thanksgiving is the bird-song of men, natural and spontaneous, welling forth in exhaustless measure from the fountain of the heart.

I hope this view of the question does not seem to any of you far-fetched; for if it does it will be exceedingly difficult for you to comprehend the apostle's injunction, "In everything give thanks." If thanksgiving is an essential principle of life and independent of its changes, then we have at least a rational basis for St. Paul's sweeping command. But if thanksgiving is only a question of circumstances, moving up and down upon a graduated scale of what we call "prosperity," then its exercise becomes exceedingly precarious, and the time may come when it is destroyed altogether.

For if we reject St. Paul's injunction: "In everything give thanks," as making an unreasonable demand upon us, we must find some other law by which to determine the expression of our gratitude assuming, of course, that we do not want entirely to abandon