

—in fact, must be the soul-life. External things, earthly possessions, fame, pleasure—whatever you please—have value only in so far as they affect the soul-life. The external good which we pursue is a good only in so far as it is conducive to the development of man's true character. This is the only theory which gives the devotion of self-sacrifice its proper place. To all hedonistic schemes there must be a loss in some direction or other. But in the one which we present, every true and noble thought, every high and exalted motive, every compassionate throb of emotion brings its reward. It develops the man, it tends to his highest good, no matter how his actions are interpreted. "Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted; if it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning back to their springs like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment."

But it is a significant fact that this highest good of man cannot be obtained by himself alone. The full development of his powers depends upon his environment, upon his association with kindred spirits. The external factor of his development depends upon the society in which he moves, upon the manner in which he affects that society and upon how he responds to the influence of those around him. It is to his advantage to do what he can for mankind—to be as unselfish as possible. It is advantageous to him to sacrifice self for their good because he not only gains by the very act of self-sacrifice but he also reaps his reward in the reaction upon himself.

But does this bring the highest satisfaction? Emphatically it does. There is nothing that can move man so intensely as to feel himself growing better, to realise that day by day his powers are developing. He is growing. He is forming a pure, unselfish, devoted, true and sublime character. To see men around him growing better from his influence, to know that that vast desert of depraved humanity is beginning to blossom with the white flowers of blameless life, to feel the moral thrill and experience the spiritual elevation on beholding such lives, is an impetus unrivalled in its potency and uneclipsed by anything in this world.

The highest present satisfaction then is secured by internal character building. This presupposes the approach to an ideal.