

nimself which may make his life divine. True, all that can degrade life—all that can animalise and make it ugly you can find within yourselves—but—then so also is it true—that all that can bless life and make it beautiful—all that can make it divine are living forces in you. Wealth, fame, eloquence are not God's greatest gifts to men; life can be sustained and made happy without either, without all of them—but the highest endowments, those without which society could not be held together—without which happiness could never shape itself into a dream—without which life itself would be but cruellest death, those belong to all men, and every man in equal proportion. It is a good thing to teach, to have power of healing—to have gift of prophecy—it is a good thing to have wealth and the power of giving—but, there is a better: To be in possession and command of those great plenary forces which impel us onward to perfection—I mean—those which abide forever and for all men—faith and hope and charity—that is better: To have that which reaches on to the place where distinctions between rich and poor, prophet and people, famous and unknown are all forgotten—where all shall rejoice in the possession of treasures that cannot be stolen—of powers that shall make men meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light—that lead with strong and certain light the footsteps up to God—that is better.

And these ordinary, but sublime, gifts are imperishable. The Apostle argues that all other things must fail. Knowledge, showing but blurred visions and imperfect outlines of the whole substance far away, looking up through the mist and cloud to spell out the syllables of divine truth, will be transformed into another likeness and appear new when it emerges out of the land of bewildering shadows into the cloudless sunlight of God's presence; prophecies and tongues shall cease, being special things to meet an emergency; but, amid all the changes, *faith* and *hope* and charity will remain the same, unchangeable, imperishable, like three fixed and blazing stars, each drawn to each by a common law, each adding lustre to all, and as others are blotted out by the relentless hand of time, they will shine on, a guide and a joy to the world.

Faith—that is an ordinary thing, it is everywhere. The snarling cynic who thinks the world all bad and every man liar—himself excepted—believes his creed every day that he lives, putting trust in a thousand people he has never seen. Scepticism in the practical affairs of life is impossible, and no man is mad enough to try it. They laid hold of that chain whose first link is in heaven and the last on the earth, and went climbing up to God.

Hope—that abideth firmer than the hills; broad as the family of man; high as desire; deep as want; it cleaves the darkness of to-morrow and flushes all the sky with glorious promise. Nations, institutions, societies, are based on hope—it is the impulse to all high and holy endeavor. It shines in the den of the back street and in the mansion; it is for all, and that made spiritual tells the man to say to his own life, "live on"—to his breaking heart, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my joy." What he has found in Christ the meaning of life—facing work, care, death itself, he will say "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath begotten us again to a lively hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Faith and hope are ordinary, they abide, they are sublime. But there is a greater—an emotion, a sentiment, a principle, a power—which makes man tender to all his kind; which sanctifies motherhood and fatherhood; which is the light of home, the music of society, the glory of a people: which streams out as waters—waters on a thirsty land; which shines as the stars of heaven and blossoms as the flowers of earth; which is Christ, who moved by it died for a world of sinners; which is God, from everlasting to everlasting. *Love*, that is greatest. It is commonplace; it is universal; it begins with the animals, grows up with increase of refinement through every grade of human life, becomes sublimated with the angels, becomes divine in God. You would be great, you would be noble, you would achieve a great destiny—don't seek for the unusual, the extraordinary—seek it in faith and hope and charity, which will make all thought, all emotion—life, time and eternity—sublime.