

to hold, or those we have identified with our reputation for consistency.

As Coleridge well says, the faith that makes a man a Christian is neither "acquiescence without insight," nor "immunity from doubt through resolute ignorance," nor "the habit of taking for granted the words of a Catechism." It is the victorious outcome of a process of struggle with the unfaithfulness or natural atheism of the heart, in which the battle is not flinched, but honestly won. The strongest believers have often been those who had the hardest fight to win their foothold on the solid ground of Christian truth—as Paul, Augustine, Luther, Duncan and Bushnell had. To such men our Lord seems to repeat his saying to Peter: "Do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren."

Hope is a victory, as well as faith. It is not the natural cheerfulness which comes of a disposition to look on the bright side of things. Dickens' Mark Tapley is no type of Christian hopefulness, and, indeed, is not even a possible human being. Hope is the triumph of a soul which has the faith to believe there is an eternal wisdom working for good through all the gloom and disasters of human life, and thus learns to look above and beyond them all for the triumph of goodness over evil. It is often a victory over natural despondency, which is capable to everyone who seeks it in God. It is not the prerogative of a few happily constituted minds, who are blind to all the darker side of things, and face life with the perpetual smile of contented ignorance.

Love is above all things a victory. As each of us is a self, and wakens up to the fact with the first dawn of consciousness, so each of us is perpetually tempted to make this self

the centre of the universe, and to estimate all things with reference to its comfort and satisfaction. Selfishness and love set the battle in array very early in the life of every human being, and the shaping of character depends on that struggle in the field of the heart. To learn to forget self in another, to acquire the heroic art of a true friendship for another, to make use and service to others, rather than gain to one's self, the goal of our existence—this is not a thing that is achieved in a day. Life, indeed, has some charming surprises that co-operate towards the result, as when the personality of some other person seems to furnish the complement of our own. But these are but openings and suggestions of higher possibilities, which will amount to some thing, or will prove a disappointment, according to our use of them.

The real way to true and lasting love for man and God is through steady and loyal obedience to love as a law, until it becomes an instinct. It is through small surrenders of our comfort, our interests, our conceit of ourselves, that the habit grows of finding a centre outside of our selves, and we rise to the social sense of other men's personality and their rights. Step by step men climb thus to the recognition of the fact that Love embraces the universe, is the other name of God, and is the motive to the great disclosure of Himself he has made in His Son. But no man gets to that level without a battle against the law in his members which sets up self as the real deity, and will not be deposed without resistance. All that is low and base in human nature revolts against such a reversal of selfish estimates of life. The love that prevails is an outcome of victory.

As faith, hope and love are the results of victory, and not natural