

tion. For the love of life is natural, and therefore the fear of death is natural. It is only when the spirit is broken, when nerve is lost, when body or mind or heart is diseased, that death can seem a gain. And if in our modern world-weariness there is a school with their morbid high-priests of literature and art, who worship at the shrine of death and speak of it affectedly as our gentle mother—even that is but another proof of heart-sickness and the fear of life. Doubt is the disease of thought, and is twin sister of fear. We may lay all the ghosts we can, and, whistling to keep our courage up, go boldly to prove that there is nothing but shadows to frighten us. But the ghosts will not be laid. The wraith of the White Lady rises at the well. Fear clings to life, elusive as the mist on the mountains.

And even when fear *for* self is beaten back from the gates, there remains for every true man fear *of* self. When we stop to think and look back on the past we can be afraid of our own base impulses and cravings. We can be afraid of our own weakness. It may be a wholesome fear, and be to us the mother of safety, as Burke called it. It may be one of the hounds of heaven to drive us from the wilderness into the fold.

And further, if self can be forgotten altogether, as it can be, there is *fear for others* in our hearts. Perfect love casts out fear, and even our imperfect human love casts out fear of the loved, but not always fear for them. There are noble forms of fear that seem almost born of love itself. Job is depicted in all his happiness and prosperity rising up early in the morning to pray and make offerings for his sons and daughters; for Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." And when the blow fell, he knew that he had been dreading some-

thing like this all his life. "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me."

There are also fears of the future on a larger scale, fears which find voice in our books to-day about the forces at work in society, with their possible social changes, the common timidity which looks with shrinking on new and untried paths. We speak glibly of this as a transition period. We even believe that conditions more true and just may emerge, but everywhere we find men dreading the plunge, the passage through the cloud. Life is open to fear on every side. Somewhere or other it can grip us by the throat, if not at this turn of the road, at the next, possibly. Fear is the sign of evil in the world. We have all to fight it sooner or later in some form or other. Life is so often lived under a grey sky and on a sodden earth. The weight of to-morrow burdens to-day. Is there not need now as ever for the blessed promise, "The Lord shall give thee rest from thy fear"?

If the cause of our modern sickness of heart is doubt—doubt of self, of life, of God—the cure for it is faith. The owls and bats and dark night-birds that hoot in our ears, are driven from us by one stroke of the flashing sword of the rising sun. If we realize that God's love is the heart of the universe and the centre of life, fear of all kind must depart. We walk serenely in the light of that love. If we accept that love, if we apply it to our every need, if we breathe in it, live in it, where is there room for fear? Want of faith in God means want of faith in human destiny. To be without God is to be without hope; for the world becomes a riddle and life a terror. Faith in the moral order of the world, in the protecting love of the Father, saves from despondency. In God there is no room for fear and no place for care. Living in the