

2. When he can see that his labor is not in vain in the Lord.

3. When he can hope that his work passes over into the right hands.

1. *When he can testify of Him of whom his heart is full.* "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." Thus answered John when they asked, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" To announce the kingdom of Heaven as at hand, to prepare the way of the Messiah, to startle the people from their sleep of sin, to make ready for a new and better time—that was his special task, his high calling, his divine mission, his sole passion.

The spirit of the old prophets, the spirit of rebuke and of warning, of consolation and of promise, of ardent patriotism and fiery zeal for God's cause, which once glowed in the hearts and sparkled from the lips of a Moses and an Elias, of an Isaiah and an Ezekiel—that spirit flamed up in his soul once more in its old might, after seeming for centuries to be extinguished.

Therefore it drove him out of the beaten track in which the priests and scribes of his time pursued their work; therefore were the schools of the Pharisees and the synagogues of the rabbis too narrow for him; therefore had the enjoyments of the world and the comforts of every-day life no attraction for him. Out in the wilderness of Jordan, where the living breath of God waved around him, where the spirit of an Elijah and an Elisha yet rustled among the crested palms—there was his delight; there must he at first, in still solitude, develop the thoughts in his great soul, and there, regardless of the fear of men or their approbation, and untrammelled by traditional forms of worship, utter in powerful preaching that of which his heart was full, proclaim among his people that which ministered to their peace.

He will be nothing more than he is; the dignity of the Messiah he meekly disclaims; with an Elijah will he not measure himself; nor does he once make pretension to the name of a prophet.

But what he is—that he knows, that he feels, that he claims for himself, that he holds fast and exercises so long as space and time are granted him: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

This vocation of his is his element; in it he lives and moves, and thus feels in his measure what the Mightier One after him utters at Jacob's Well, in the beautiful saying: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

To work in the calling appointed of God, to testify of Him of whom the heart is full—in this lies also, for us who are not worthy to unloose the shoe latches of a John, the noblest satisfaction, the true enjoyment of life. To dare to be what we can and will, to dare accomplish that whereto one feels in oneself the gift and vocation—therein lies, even from a human point of view, the true happiness. Read the biographies of remarkable men who have distinguished themselves in any department of human knowledge and action: how interesting when a special proclivity toward his future vocation manifests itself already in the child, and in the element in which the young soul lives, so that even the plays of the boy turn in that direction; how touching when, through all sorts of hindrances and difficulties, with severe struggles and abnegations, the native talent breaks its way till it finds the path of its calling and the sphere of its action! Ask any valiant man of sound head and heart: When art thou happiest? What are thy most fortunate hours? He will not be likely to say: My hours of rest, when I have nothing to do but care for my body; or my hours of recreation, when I unbend and enjoy myself in every way. But he will say: I am happiest in the work of my profession, in the full consciousness and full use of my God-given faculties. The learned man among his books, and the artist before his canvas or at his instrument, the teacher among his pupils, and the farmer in his field, the physician among his sick, and the artisan in his