

Borrowed Light

John, the beloved, records this saying of our Lord: "I am the light of the world." This same Jesus, in His marvellous sermon on the Mount of Olives, also said: "Ye are the light of the world." The moon is an opaque body; it's like a burnt-out world. But who has not been enraptured with its mellow radiance during the hours of one of these beautiful northern nights? Oh, yes, it shines not of itself, but because somewhere, in a zone far beyond, a sun is shining. My dear heart, shine on. You rest in the rich diffusion of light that falls from the Sun of Righteousness. It's an exaltation of which we are utterly unworthy, for we shine because our Lord shines. It is only borrowed light. O for a consciousness that every divine ray is bent upon our poor, redeemed hearts! What a grand thought is that of Paul—"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." The thought is almost overpowering, that we may gaze into the heaven of heavens, and all the while the change is silently stealing over us. Somebody sweetly said that we stand all bewildered with wonder and gaze on an ocean of love. And we are wont to sing:

Let me love Thee more and more,
Till this fleeting, fleeting life is o'er;
Till my soul is lost in love,
In a brighter, brighter world above.

"The Lust of the Eyes"

The Apostle understood the danger to the morals of the people from a perverted vision, and warned against it. What a child sees has as direct a bearing on what that child becomes as what he hears. Nothing more quickly debases the mind than unwholesome pictures, and the habit of feasting the soul on them soon brings about a degenerate condition of morals that makes crime easy. Every home should present objects of beauty to the enquiring eyes of the little child, the inquisitive vision of the growing boy should have nothing harmful to his highest good thrust before it, and our more mature youth should refuse to look upon anything that tends to moral hardness or spiritual ill. It is easier to write these sentences than to ensure the conditions for which they plead, for temptations are all too many to our girls and boys. The streets of our cities with their ugly signs, unsightly advertisements, disfiguring bill-boards, are all unwholesome and tend to disfigure the souls of the onlookers as well as the neighborhood in which they stand. The crude, grotesque, and often vicious caricatures of human life that hang insultingly before the average "nickel shows" on our streets, can have only an evil influence on thousands. Even the popular war pictures, with their portrayal of cruelty and savage barbarism, are of harmful tendency to many of the young. It is not easy, but it is imperative, that we look not upon hurtful things, and so avoid the evils that come from "the lust of the eyes."

The Fugitive To-Morrow

The disposition to postpone present duty until "to-morrow," or to that indefinite period when one shall have "more time," is characteristic of too many of our young folk. It has long been said that "procrastination is the thief of time." It is more. Not only does it cause the irrecoverable loss of precious hours, but it develops a habit that is most injurious to character. "To-morrow" never comes. "To-day" is ever present. Not by vague dreams of what the future may bring of opportunity, but by the careful discharge of to-day's claims upon us in study, work or service, do we become strong in resolution and prompt in performance. To-day is the priceless possession of all—to-morrow is but a fugitive expectation. Whatever of self-improvement we propose must be done without delay if

each succeeding day would find us growing in grace or increasing in wisdom. Not wishing for goodness, but practising it is the sure method of obtaining it in increasing measure. Not in waiting for a more fitting occasion to embody the Golden Rule in our conduct, but by making it the constraining principle by which our intercourse with others is governed, is the only sane way for a Christian to live. Not by longing for "more time" to do great deeds of kindness, but by using passing minutes in social helpfulness, may we hope to develop in our hearts the spirit of Him who went about doing good. Not "to-morrow" but "now" should be the watchword governing our actions.

"Now is the time. Ah, friend, no longer wait
To scatter loving smiles and words of cheer
To those around whose lives are now so dear—
They may not need you in the coming year.
Now is the time."

"Evil for Evil"

These are surely times when we must diligently guard our hearts against hate and prevent our lips from speaking evil. The spirit of jealousy seems to be rampant on the earth and by its promptings is leading millions into deeds of unprecedented cruelty. Every man's hand seems to be against his brother man, and in the awful strife among the nations the most dreadful slaughter the world has ever seen is apparently hailed with inward gloating, if not with outward glee. We are told how Germany hates England, and doubtless it is true. It is pitiable and sad, but it would be infinitely more so if England should hate Germany in return. And the danger lies right there. We may "render evil for evil" in inward spirit as well as in outward action. Just how far the war being waged was prompted by hate only the omniscient God can know. Our obligation is to refrain from retaliation in the same bitter spirit. There is such a thing as righteous defence, and we believe the Allies are fighting it. But the danger is that we may foster in our own hearts the very spirit which prompted the inception of the war. That Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey must be thoroughly beaten we fully agree; but we must keep our hearts with all diligence lest they become filled with malice and wickedness. Let us not say as we overheard a bright girl express in most emphatic words the other day, "I hate the Kaiser," but while we pray for the success of the cause of the allied armies, let us also pray that we may not be unworthy of the victory for which we long so ardently. We may think that we have good cause for hating the Kaiser and all combined with him, and humanly speaking, we may find abundant reasons for our thought, but we are wrong. We must never hate a person, no matter how deeply we may deplore his actions. We may fight him because he attacks us, but we must at the same time pray for him if we would fulfil the Christian law. We honor our brave soldiers and sailors who defend our righteous cause, we pray for their welfare and success; but we must not hate our enemies even though they despitely use us. If we do we shall become guilty of the very evil we condemn in them. An evil spirit must not rule in our hearts.

In Tune

We hear much of the theory of spiritual culture nowadays. Bringing the powers of our own lives into tune—that's really the one great problem. The audience is waiting for the concert to begin. A strange clangor is going on behind the curtain. The various instruments are being tuned. At first they are far apart, but in a little while they are all in harmony. Then the music begins. Each individual life is an entire orchestra within itself. It is not always in tune. Before life's sweetest music can be made it must be brought into harmony. He who knows how has learned the art of spiritual culture—and only he.