



BETTER LIVES FOR COMMON PEOPLE

Studies of the Way of Peace

BY

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of Canada," etc.*

"I will go where you want me to go, Lord,
Over mountain and plain and sea ;
I will say what you want me to say, Lord,
And be what you want me to be."

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS

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BETTER LIVES FOR COMMON PEOPLE

CALLED TO OBSCURITY.

A YOUNG man, discontented with his station in life and listless in the performance of his duties, dreamed that he was carried into a beautiful country, where flowers grew in great profusion and the groves were redolent with orange blossoms. In the centre of all the attractions of nature stood a beautiful palace of enormous size, with domes and turrets of wondrous grace. Its walls were marble, the doors were pearl, the floor of gold, and the ceiling was studded with diamonds. On one side of the palace was a small brown niche, which caught the eye of the visitor, as it was not in harmony with the rest of the building. Turning to his attendant, he inquired the cause of this blot on the fair structure, and was told that the building was the Palace Beautiful, and this brown niche

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belonged to him. While others had been striving to do their best in the world for God and man, they had been polishing their respective niches, and adding to the harmony of the whole, but he had been discontented and had not improved his opportunities, and upon him rested the responsibility of making the palace perfect. This is a picture of the condition of some Christians, who waste their time brooding over their lowly station and few opportunities, instead of making the most of what they have, and fitting themselves for greater things. Only by making a wise use of the present will the future grow in strength and splendor. It may be difficult for you to live in obscurity, plodding on from day to day at your accustomed task. It is easier to dream of doing great things, and to yearn after some fine opportunity of blessing the world with a master-stroke of goodness. It is hard to stand in the rear waiting for promotion, but that is the place to begin. The lowest step is always the safest to begin life, and the method of exaltation in the world and in the service of God is step by step. Saints are not made in a day. God makes men as He makes trees, by daily progress in faithful service, growing quietly and surely through being joined to Him,

drawing nourishment through the appointed means of grace, and expanding by giving forth the life in helping men and women in their trials, and pointing them, by godly precept and example, to Christ, as the source of all that is noble and true.

It is a great inspiration to meet a strong man moving in a lowly sphere, taking up his daily task for God, and contented to glorify his Master by doing his best in his station. If his occupation is to build bridges, he does the work so thoroughly that he adorns his religious profession by his work. He feels that God has called him to engage in that work, and he serves God in building the best bridges he can, not for the applause of men, but because his single heart will not allow him to do less than his best for men. God calls some men to live obscure lives. There are unnamed heroes in the Bible who were greatly honored by God, yet we know little of their history. We read in the roll-call of the heroes in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They

were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Nameless saints were these whose record is on high. Jesus had some private friends who were dear to Him, but their names are unknown to us. The glare of public life is not for some, the lowly station is more fitting for them; but in their own appointed place, godly ambition is felt and seen in their earnest endeavor to glorify God in their daily task. God calls some men to lay the foundations of His palace, while others form the turrets and ornament the imposing portions of His great spiritual building. If He calls an Isaiah and a Jeremiah to proclaim in glowing language the coming of the King and His march among the nations, if He calls some to be apostles and evangelists, He also calls others to serve tables and reveal the beauty of the Christ-life in simple devotion. In all true service the spirit with which the task is done is the test of greatness. The hewers of wood and the drawers of water who do their work well are greater in the sight of God than the High Priests who render

imperfect service. You may be called to be an artist or to serve in the kitchen, you may be ordained to be a preacher, a teacher in the Sunday School, or a quiet saint speaking to men by your life and gentle words, but rest assured that you are called to some sphere, and in that place you are expected by your Master to do your best to commend Him to sinners, and magnify the grace which has saved you from sin.

The majority of men live obscure lives. The rank and file greatly outnumber the officers of the army. A few are leaders, many are followers. Look into the faces of the people passing one another in the streets of a great city, and you will see how large a proportion of them live in obscurity. It is the same in a large congregation—the majority plod along their cheerful way, happy in the love of their Saviour. God stamps obscurity with His seal. The great unknown multitude in the world are like the bolts and small wheels in an intricate machine. They are all necessary, and though they make little or no noise, they are doing their share of service as really and truly as the fly-wheel or the steam which drives the whole. God hides many of His beautiful things where men seldom see them. The Mammoth Cave in Kentucky contains many of those wonderful things which

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charm the eye and instruct both mind and heart ; Fingal's Cave, in the north of Scotland, and the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, with their symmetrical columns of basaltic rock, the playful effects of reflected light, the echoes of the measured surge of the waters, make fairy solitudes reserved for a few of the human race. The Maker of these palaces of nature places them in these hidden haunts of men to excite curiosity and then to satisfy it. These are faint expressions of the wealth and unconscious goodness of our Father. All men are born to obscurity. There comes a time in the history of the greatest men when their names are a memory, and even that passes away. Most poets are soon forgotten ; even a Homer and Shakespeare cannot be remembered forever. Great heroes have lived and died of whom the world has never heard. There is a path railed off through Bunhill Fields burying-ground where you tread upon the tombstones of men who once moved and were a force in the heart of London. They are forgotten, and the countless tread of feet will wear away their names. That is the lot of every man in the world. Read the names on the tombstones of an old graveyard ; the owners are no longer remembered. How many beautiful poems have been written whose authors are

now named *Anonymous*. We shall all be *anonymous* in the world by and by. God has stamped this fact of obscurity in nature and in the history of the world for the purpose of directing you to seek the glory of immortality, by having your names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and to labor for eternity. Strive, then, for that glory which lies beyond the skies where none are forgotten, and no true thoughts, brave deeds and holy lives are passed by.

There is an obscure life which is not the hiding of your life, but the genial outflow of inner godliness seeking not the glory of men. This obscure life is opposed to the Pharisaic life. It does not boast of its long prayers, giving of alms and outward aspects of holiness, but builds upon Christ, and allows the beauty of inward godliness to manifest itself in natural ways. It reveals Christ, and not self. It speaks of the Master, and not of the servant. Its possession of the graces of the spiritual life goes beyond the profession of superior godliness. This is the real and strong life. Do your duty without any yearning for the plaudits of men. Do the right, and your ideal of holiness will grow until that day when you shall see the King in His beauty. This is the great life. It is great in the fact that there is no attempt to do great

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things, but an earnest striving after things that are true. It is content to abide in the valley with the green pastures, without any yearning for a home on the mountain with its snow and barren rocks. It will be a fountain quenching the thirst of man and beast, if it cannot be a reservoir supplying the great city. It will see the beautiful traits of men and women rather than their faults and foibles, and bear the irritations caused by nervous women and sinful men for Christ's sake. This is the enduring life. Simply saving good seed from day to day will reap an abundant harvest in eternity.

We are indebted to the anonymous ministries of life for many of the blessings we enjoy. The anonymous ministries of life are greater in number and influence than the services labelled by the doers. Take up a missionary report giving the list of donors, and how few there are who are known to you. A hundred names, more or less, will cover the names of your acquaintances ; the rest are anonymous. They are like the initials of the artist placed in the corner of a painting, which is recognized by a select few. The thousandfold acts of goodness performed in the name of Christ are known only to Him. But how great is their influence in the world.

Without them the world would be poor. And what a blessing it is to know that God sees and interprets the unspoken prayer, the shake of the hand which is the grip of the heart, the secret act of kindness, and the earnest yearning of the soul which follows the sinner until death.

God is calling you to greatness in His kingdom. In the world greatness is measured by ability, wealth and position, and these are the tests in the divine kingdom,—only instead of being material, they are spiritual. The ability to recognize the claims of God, and to enter into them, the possession of the riches of Christ, and the filling of a high place in personal character and holiness, constitute real greatness. Obedience toward God is the great test of fitness in the kingdom. God does not want you to fill another man's place or to do another man's work, but He desires you to improve your opportunities with the possessions and powers which He has given you. He is calling you to be great in character, and then you will be great in your acts. He is calling you to a quiet, industrious and honest every-day existence. You do not need to go to China to be a missionary, you can be one at home. You need not make a long pilgrimage to some holy shrine to do penance or make a sacrifice. You can find God where

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you are, and the holiest pilgrimage is the journey of the soul to God by repentance and faith, and the greatest sacrifice is the giving of yourself wholly to God and man. You can see God anywhere, in the stars and flowers, and in man, and you can serve God anywhere if only your heart is right with Him. You are called to holiness, to a life of saintliness, where your features will be transfigured by the beauty of the soul. Spiritual lineage is the true lineage, and the real succession is spiritual descent from Christ. Seek to be known as a follower of Christ, rather than by natural ancestry or your position in the world. The worth of a man lies in character. Men are estimated in heaven by that which has dominated them on earth. The worth of any work lies in its truthfulness, being done for God and men. An ant will drop its load of sweetness which it is bearing to its home, to carry in a wounded or sick ant, and men should lay aside their tasks to help a weary soul, and always should this be done. Every-day heroism is real heroism. It is not confined to single actions on the field of battle, to saving men from wrecks at sea, or rescuing people from a burning building. At the Children's Hospital, Toronto, it became necessary that skin should be grafted on the back of a child in order to save his life.

A call was issued for volunteers to sacrifice some of their skin to save the little patient. When the students of Toronto University heard the call, fifteen of them who at the time were attending a prayer-meeting offered their services. From the arm of each two strips of skin three inches long and one inch wide were removed and transferred to the back of the child. The students desired that their names should not be published. Here is real heroism in daily life. And there are many brave men and women who in the struggle of life are heroic in their homes, for should any special call come to them for a particular act of heroism they are ready for the emergency. In the name of Christ and for the good of men they are ready to make sacrifices, because they are always prepared for every Christ-like duty. Every-day holiness is real holiness. You do not need to seek a monastery in the desert. You can find a saint's cell in the humble garret of some lonely sufferer. There are no obscure persons with God. All are known to Him, and the life spent for man will be accepted by Him who doeth all things well.

Live for God where you are, honestly, simply and in the spirit of Christ. Deepen your religious instincts by dwelling at the Cross and

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holding converse often with your Master. Live to God in your own sphere, chiselling your statue in the shade, under the eye of Christ, and glad with the assurance of His presence in the lowliest place on earth, where you may serve Him with joyous content.

THE SILENT PARTNER.

IN a firm composed of several persons for the purposes of trade, there is sometimes a sleeping partner who is the chief person, because he furnishes the capital for the other members to use in the business. Without his help the firm would be unable to do any work, and the partnership must be dissolved. In the work of personal holiness and the salvation of the world, God is the silent partner who furnishes the capital and gives the necessary stimulus and direction. You are a partner in the concern. You are not a hired servant in the firm working for wages, but a partner working together with God for the salvation of the world. There is a divine workshop in the world where men and women are engaged in a high and holy calling, worthy of the talents of angels, yet committed to mortals. Saints are called to work in this divine workshop. Work is the law of success in every department of life. The laborer must work for his daily bread, the proprietor of a

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large factory must keep a firm grip upon all the affairs of his establishment if he would succeed, and Christian work is the law of spiritual life and prosperity and of growth of character. In the workshop of the world, God is the silent partner. He furnishes all the capital and all the ideas, and whatever success you may win in blessing men, the honor and glory must be given to Him, without whose help you could not accomplish anything. In the work of personal holiness He is the silent partner. You have no power to make yourself holy. A long pilgrimage to a famous shrine will not remove your sins. You may be an expert in the forms and ceremonies of religion, but skill in and devotion to rites will not purify your heart. Tears may wash the face but not the soul. The work of personal sanctification lies in the use of the means God has given you for your growth in spiritual things when they lead you to Himself. It is God Himself who makes you holy. The Holy Spirit places His gifts at your feet that you may look at them, and then be drawn to ask them. He puts the priceless treasures of Christ within your reach. The Spirit opens a great palace of treasures, and invites you to enter and take the best gifts in store. If you watch the painter making designs upon a porcelain cup,

you will see figures which seem imperfect and uncouth, and when he has finished his task and put the cup aside, you will notice the strange contrast between the beautiful vessel and the rough designs. But the work is not done until it has passed through the intense heat of the furnace. When the fire has touched the cup, and glowed with fierce power, the vessel becomes transfigured, and the dazzling gift is changed as in a dream from black to gold. Sometimes the beauty of holiness is not seen through the dark touches of Providence, and you cannot understand the ways of God. By and by the black markings made by the finger of the Spirit are touched by the fierce heat of affliction, and grief is turned into joy, and the whole life is transfigured into the beauty of the Lord. If you wish to be made holy, you must follow the path of God and do His bidding. The Spirit does not compel anyone to accept His guidance, but He makes continual offers of all His gifts, and it rests with you whether you will accept or reject them. You are made holy by appropriating the gifts of Christ and the Holy Spirit. If you will allow the Spirit to rule in your heart and over your life, there will follow perfect peace and love.

There is implanted in the heart at conversion

a strong desire to work for God. A converted man cannot keep to himself the secret of the wonderful discovery of Christ. A heart cleansed from sin must speak out the story of divine love to other hearts. The divine yearning in human hearts for the salvation of men is the call of God to service. When Christ touches the soul it begins to sing, and men listen with a fervid longing to learn the music of heaven. Christ says to His followers, "Let him who loves me follow me." Those who follow Christ are doing the wisest possible thing, and they know by a divine instinct, supplemented by a divine witness, that they are doing the will of God. There is given you a share in doing the work of God. Christ says to all the sons of God, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." Unto every man there is given an opportunity to work for God, but every man does not improve his opportunity. It may not be permitted you to do great things in Christian service, but there is something for you to do. In some moment when you least expect it there may come a great opportunity, and then if you have accepted the events of life as a preparation for service, you will be ready. Every child of God has some talent, power and opportunity of getting good and doing good, and every day offers some opportunity for using

this opportunity. The success of any campaign lies in following in every detail the plan of the leader, and in working for God the success of the divine campaign lies in your readiness to learn the plans of God, and to enter heartily into them, and to carry them out with all the ability which you possess. It is a great privilege to have a share in doing God's work. It is a blessed thing, exceeding the comprehension of man, to let Christ into the inner life of a sinner. When Christ enters the soul and rules over the life, a man makes a wonderful discovery of himself, for within him there lies an unexplored territory, which the Master himself alone can explore and reveal. The whole being of a man is changed when Christ gains the supreme control. A sinner is lifted into a higher, nobler and more useful way of living when Christ is allowed to take him in charge. It is your privilege to make a man noble by introducing Christ to him. You are responsible for doing your share of the work of God. Another man cannot do your work for you. You are appointed to keep some other man or some other life. By a wise word you may awaken a slumbering soul and send an indifferent Christian into a path of beautiful service, where he may win many souls from the darkness of

heathenism. By a holy life you may provoke men unto love and good works. By a godly example you may lead men into companionship with Christ, where they will be roused to noble energies, and trained in spiritual service. It is the work of God you are to do. You are commanded to work in God's vineyard, and not to waste your talents in a little patch of unbroken land down in the valley, where the sun never shines and the vines cannot grow. You must take care not to spend your energy in a little vineyard of your own choosing, where you are sure to fail though you may have the wisdom of the ancients and the strength of a giant.

Sometimes God pushes men into His work. He invites and He commands His sons to engage in work for Him. "Come!" is often followed by "Go, work!" An unseen force sometimes presses you behind, and you fail to respond to the pressure and so lose the divine blessing. Some Christians not only fail to respond to the divine force pressing them to work for God, but they go farther, and push the wrong way. Sometimes God pushes you forward, and you push backward, and then you wonder why you have not more peace and joy. A call to duty may come from behind as well as from before. You may be looking upward

and forward, and while you are wondering why you hear not the voice of God, He is pressing you from behind and speaking to you, but you cannot hear Him because you will not listen in the right direction. Sometimes God presses you to work for Him by means of interruptions, so that when you are not ready to do His bidding He puts in little bits of His will during your busy hours, and you call them interruptions, whereas they are parts of His plan to keep you in touch with the world and in attachment to Himself. You may be tempted to wait for an opportunity to do some great deed, and die at last without performing it; but if you will every day perform some little deeds of love, you will be trained and in readiness for the great deed when it presents itself. If you will do the small duty, the large one will come in due time. If you will do the will of God, there will never be an obstructed path when duty calls, but the way will be open to your feet.

You are to do the work of God as a son of God should do it. Your highest thought in working for God should be to do it to please Him. All your service should be wrought with a well-defined purpose, just as a blacksmith in making a horseshoe or a builder in erecting a

house. Do the work of God in the best way you can according to the divine plan. As a man who builds a house of elegant design in an old street compels all the owners of houses to follow his example, so you should set the standard for others by your life. You will enlarge your borders of influence by setting high standards of holy living which are practical. A famous artist painted some panels in a building, which cost twice the sum he was paid for the work, and then he decorated the next spaces to prevent them being desecrated by inferior artists. If you begin any work for Christ, and perform it in the right spirit, you will be led on to larger areas of noble service. If you work hard for God, you will require to work still harder to keep up your reputation and efficiency. God calls you to do His work in your own way, with your own talents and opportunities, as you are linked to Him and guided by the Spirit. Your Father uses your individuality as you allow Him to do so, and you can best help men by living your own life. Your own individuality is the charm which attracts and blesses men. The humblest life becomes enchanting when all the powers which distinguish it from all other lives are placed in the hands of God to be controlled and directed.

There is a place for you in the world ; but while you may fill some place, it may not be the place God intended for you. While you are working your own little patch in the vineyard of God, remember that there are mountains around you, by which you are protected against the attacks of your enemies, and your Father is on guard keeping watch and smiling approval. Thank God every day that all the work of God has not been done, and there is something left for you to do, which must be done whether you like it or not. You are called to do God's work in a divine way, not as you think best, but as God wants it done. As you are working you must not keep thinking always that you are made better by your work, but become so absorbed in it with the thought that you are working for God and men that you will do better work, and be changed into beauty by it. The artist who is always thinking of the sum he is to receive for his painting, will do work inferior to that of another of equal ability who forgets all in his love for his art. It matters little whether you are ahead of others or not, it is your duty to attend to your own special work. You must take men as you find them ; and while they are not as good as they ought to be, it becomes you as

a child of God to seek the good that is in them, and make the most of it. The Holy Spirit is the silent partner who furnishes you with what is necessary for doing the work of God. He grants you love for it, so that you may see the worth and beauty of it ; He gives you courage, that you may continue in the face of difficulties, and He directs you how to do it. It is only by following the divine direction that you can become a co-worker with God. The holiness of God is the condescension of His love toward you. It is not an iceberg to freeze you and keep you far from Him, but a mountain full of treasures to protect and enrich you. You may be depending upon culture or material agencies to aid you in serving God, but these are only the machinery awaiting the power to work. You may have gaspipes and all the fixtures necessary for artificial light, but unless there is a supply of gas from the gasometer, there will be no light ; and as machinery is not power, but only the means connected with the source of supply, so all material aids are of no avail without connection with Christ. You may desire to have the Holy Spirit enter your heart and possess you, but the entrance may be blocked by sin. You may hold a corked bottle all day long under a fountain, and

you will not get any water ; and if the passage to your soul is barred, you cannot receive the Holy Spirit. If you wish to be all that God desires, let Him press you to His heart. Take an opal in your hand and press it for a few moments, and it will flash with light and color ; so let God take you in His hand and press you to His heart, and there will flash out from you patience, hope and love. Without God you are only a poor stone, having no light or beauty. Man without God is of the dust that perishes, but man joined to God can accomplish the impossible.

There is a glory in obedience. It is a glorious thing to be told by God to do a thing, and then simply to do it. If all men abode in true obedience there would be no grief or sorrow, for all men would be at one, and all would lead lives in harmony with the will of God. The necessary equipment of a son of God for doing perfectly the work of God is a willing spirit. How often we try to control God instead of allowing God to control us. You lay your plans for an excursion with some friends to a pleasure resort in the country, and for a long time you have been thinking of the joy in the outing, but when the day comes you are sick in bed and cannot go. Then you

undertake to direct God by your complaint, and by your murmuring spirit you tell Him that you could have managed your affairs better than He has done. You have been willing to do the will of God, but you have failed to discover the largeness of His will. As a servant of God you must be willing to serve Him where He desires you to be, and in the way He plans for your good. The necessary equipment for a son of God is perfect obedience. You may know His will, but if you do it not there will not be peace and joy. Knowledge is not a substitute for practice. A man may know a great deal about the principles of drawing and yet be a poor artist, and you may have a large knowledge of the Bible and of what God desires you to do, and yet you may live a very indifferent life. The secret of consecration is devotion to the will of God, and that may be to go to a distant land to preach the Gospel, or to live your own life of godliness in your own village, or it may be to lie upon a bed of pain for many months. The secret lies in not choosing your own path, but in accepting the plan of God for your own life. You are sent into the world to engage in that work which consumes your whole nature, not with a dull routine of contentment, but with your soul fired with enthusiasm. You are

God's servant every day and in every place, and you cannot divide your time or service between God and yourself. Your own interests must be merged in the holy partnership into which you have entered, and there must be no place for any separate interest. You must be absolutely loyal to God. You are not to be an inventor of new things, but learn to appreciate the things which God has approved. You are not called to improve the Lord's methods, but you are to allow Him to improve your plans and methods.

By perfect obedience to the divine will you will receive power to do the work of God. Whatever need you may have, God has a blessing suited to it, and He never misses an opportunity of helping you. It is not your duty to live down your griefs, but to live up to the lessons of sorrow. God is working out His purpose in you according to the measure of your surrender to Him. In partnership with Him, He will make you more than a conqueror in all you undertake. It is not so much talent and education that you need as the Spirit to possess you. By perfect obedience to the divine will you will be exalted to higher privileges and duties. You will have great honor in association with God, not as a hired servant, but as a partner in business. You will receive

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strength to do His work in a divine way. The true method of defeating the world is not by meeting scorn with scorn, or doubt with doubt, but to go on trusting in God till your faith removes mountains. Do good to men, and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storms of time cannot destroy. Write your name on the hearts of men by kindness and love, and you will not be forgotten, for your name and deeds will shine as brightly in human hearts as the stars on the face of the sky. Work out the will of God by accepting the burden of sorrow and translating it into patience, love and strength. God is doing His best for you. Even the sickness and disappointments of life are of His ordering or permission, and the best of God is far better for you than anything else. He never abandons His plan of doing the best for you and making the best of you. Will you allow Him to fulfil His purpose in you and by you? Obey Him perfectly and you will please Him. You can have no occupation or station in life as a child of God which is so honorable or useful as that to which He has called you, and you ought to listen to His direction and always be upon His side. By so doing you will be transformed into the likeness of Christ. What the artist is striving to do

when He attempts to portray Christ upon the canvas, you are called to do, not with brush and colors, but with thoughts, desires and actions, so that your inner and outer life may be a faithful portrait of your Master. Christ does not impart His gift to you all at once. He is seeking to give you a complete manhood, and when you take Christ you enter into a region of spiritual experience which will widen until you gaze upon the King in His beauty in the land that is afar off. Look at the dust on the road, blown by the wind, making the air thick, the grass gray, and the flowers hang their heads as if doing penance. Look when the sun is setting and you will see the dust hanging like a veil of gold before the face of night, and the coarse thing glows as by a miracle of light, and it holds the radiance of heaven. Man is but as dust. When Christ shines upon him the dull gray color of his life fades away, and he is transformed into a beauty greater than earth can bestow. May you be changed into the likeness of the King by entering fully into partnership with Him, and in perfect obedience may you enjoy the glory of the vision when He smiles upon you.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

LONGING for a large life, full of labor and joy, is the condition of many Christians. They desire to stand on the mountain-top and see the beauties of the landscape. They long to be like Christ and have power to do good to men. Well, it is your privilege as a child of God to grow in spiritual life and power. You are not doomed to be imprisoned within walls and bars, for the soul cannot be confined, and you need not sit and mope in silence because there are no higher things for you in Christ. You may rise with the wings of an eagle and soar above the clouds of doubt. You may live a strong life of faith, blessing men and glorifying God by your daily walk. You may enjoy the hero's strength in fighting with sin, and be crowned victor in the strife. You may please God and find your chief delight in His service as you engage in your daily toil. It is your privilege to walk with God as the saints of old, and hear Him speak as a Father imparting comfort and peace.

It is the duty of every Christian to advance in personal holiness and in ability to work for God and man. You are not to remain always in the place where God has put you, nor to keep your talent as God gave it to you, and then return it to Him. He puts you at the bottom of the hill which you are to climb, that He may disclose to you the treasures hidden by the way, and that you may gather strength and knowledge as you climb. Flowers are made to grow, but men may put them in a dark cellar and imbed them in sand without moisture, and they will fail to fulfil the purpose of God which lies in the plant; and the talents of mind and heart which you possess may be so neglected that instead of progress your growth in knowledge and grace is retarded, and you do not attain the position intended for you. It is your duty to be gaining in experience and growing in grace and in likeness to Christ. You must take the world as you find it, but you must not leave the world as you found it. You are in the world to make it better, leaving the impress of pure thoughts, godly ideals and aspirations, and Christ-like words and deeds upon it. As a seal leaves its image upon the wax, so your life touches the world and leaves its impress upon it. Thus you are engaged in making the world

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new, and you can do this, not by journeying from place to place, but by going from glory to glory in Christ. The method by which you are to make progress in the divine life is by having a clean heart and clean hands. Job says, "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Sin is like the snow on the railroad in the mountains which hinders the train in its progress. Remove the worldly weights which keep the soul trammelled to the earth, and it will rise like a balloon into the pure air of God's love and peace. Wash the hands clean from the stains of selfishness and unholy companionship, that you may be able to stand in the presence of God. Let your conduct be as becometh a saint, and you will grow in beauty as a flower of rarest hue.

Inward holiness is the first step toward spiritual strength. A man may own a large library of great value, wherein the treasures of knowledge written by learned men for centuries lie hidden, and yet he may remain an ignorant man. If he would be wise he must study the books and allow the knowledge to enter his mind and mould it, and thus he will become strong with the wisdom of the sages. So there may be treasures of spiritual knowledge in Christ, and the Holy Spirit may be a guide into

paths of wisdom and grace, but unless these are appropriated by you there is no inward holiness and no spiritual strength. Spiritual strength is found alone in God. It is obtained by a full surrender to God. Peace always follows surrender. The continual jaggging of the point of a pin may jar upon the nerves and destroy the comfort of a day, and small rebellions against the leadings of the Holy Spirit will breed disquiet. There can be no peace until the pinpoint of rebellion is removed and you surrender fully to God. Make the needful surrender to God and peace will come. Obedience is the pathway to discovery. Travel toward God and a new world awaits you. A new earth of obedience will mean a new heaven of experience. The promise of the Father awaits your claiming. Strength comes by letting go. Take your feeble hands off the oars when your tiny boat is tossed by the waves, and let the strong arms of your Father bend to the oars, and you will be safe. Let God undertake for you and you will find strength in the surrender of your weakness. Strength comes by finding out the way in which God is going and by going in that way, for He leads to plough, and you can only follow His furrow and sow the seed. Surrender to God is the secret of holiness. You may have prayed

to possess the Holy Spirit that you might use the gift for the glory of God, and thus use Him as an instrument for good. Change your prayer for a season and ask that the Spirit may possess you and you be used by Him. Let Him be the artist and put yourself in His hands as a tool, and you will be made holy and accomplish much through His power in you.

Holiness has its true place in the heart. Life lies at the centre of the tree and not in the branches, and holiness has its place in the heart before it is expressed in the life. Evil has its origin in the heart, and there it must be attacked and uprooted. Cleanse the blood before you apply salve to the running sores. Get the soul cleansed from sin before you put on the garb and profession of a saint. It is your duty to go to Christ that He may cleanse your heart from sin. You have no right to carry the burden of sin when provision has been made to remove it. A mechanic has no right to remain idle when not only is there work awaiting him, but he is pressed to do it and receive ample wages, and he is strong enough to perform it. Christ has made provision for cleansing your soul and giving dominion over sin, and He is calling you to enjoy these blessings, and it is your duty to avail yourself of the provision and be made

holy. It is your duty to grow in grace. You have no right to make a plan for your life which God cannot approve. You have no right to fail when you have been made to succeed. You have no right to work without God when He has called you to be a worker with Him. On Calvary there is cleansing from sin, in the upper room there is power, and in the Holy Spirit there is peace and joy; and it is your duty to possess these blessings. You are made to grow. You are called to be an extraordinary Christian, and not to be contented with an average spiritual life.

You are not only called to have a clean heart; you are commanded to have clean hands. Your conduct must be holy as well as your inner life. Outward holiness is more than morality. In an old book on natural history there is a picture wherein toads are fastened to the branches of a tree, in the belief that they grew upon trees and then dropped into the water; but toads do not grow on trees, and righteous conduct may seem to be morality, but it is more than a matter of the outward life. Holiness is morality with its source in the devout heart. Outward holiness is the expression of inward holiness. The inner life will show itself outwardly. Love works outward. Love will show itself in words, deeds

and sacrifices, because it cannot help showing itself. Spirituality will manifest itself better on the ground than in the air, and the plain doing of duty every day is better than flights of rapture on Sunday. To overcome one grudge in your heart, to do one painful duty, to obey the call of God when it interferes with your own plans, will do more to carry you forward in the way of holiness than joyous feelings. Outward holiness is the necessary addition of inward holiness. You are not called to be a monk, pursuing the rounds of devotion in a cell, but a saint, living in the world, doing good to men. Holiness is not a question of feeling, but doing the will of God. Feeling is a poor guide of conduct. A man would not be acquitted for theft because he felt like stealing, and the spiritual man will lose the promise of fruitfulness and much of the presence of God if he only does good when he feels like it. You must work for God whether you feel like it or not, for the path of duty leads to the temple of victory and peace. Righteous actions must accompany holy thoughts and desires. You may become a dead-weight to the world as it is marching toward God, and hinder some weary soul from finding peace, by indifference to your conduct. You may plead that you are sincere, and God

knows that, but your fellowmen do not. The partaking of meat would not hurt the conscience of Paul, but if it hindered a weak brother he was ready to abstain from its use. The ethics of holiness demand words and actions which are Christ-like. Day dreams are good in their place, but a noble act is the crown of a good intention. Perfect dreaming will not do perfect work. You must not only have right intentions; there must be performance. The man who is active is liable to make mistakes and commit some injuries, but the indolent man does no good.

Outward holiness is the duty of every Christian. A true and holy life is more powerful than teaching. Actions speak louder than words. A holy life is more eloquent than the greatest sermon of an orator in the pulpit. Pure thoughts speaking through a consistent life touch the hearts of men and mould their lives. It is well to go with the crowd when you can do so with a good conscience, but sometimes it is necessary to dissent from the opinions of the crowd, which usually rise no higher than the lower average of sentiment in their own ranks. You cannot afford to be a time-server, walking upon eggs without crushing them or among glasses without breaking them. You

will not be able to walk upon hot cinders without injury. Be faithful to Christ. It is your duty as a child of God to put emphasis upon right things. You may change the meaning of a sentence by putting emphasis upon the wrong word, and in daily life you may place emphasis upon the wrong thing and thus destroy the distinct purpose of your life. You must learn to place the emphasis always upon the right thing. The union of inward and outward holiness constitutes the perfection of godliness. When the inner life is a life hid with Christ in God, and this is united with kind words and beautiful deeds, the saint is far on the road toward the Palace Beautiful.

A man who has a clean heart and clean hands shall wax stronger. If you enjoy inward and outward holiness your faith shall increase, your love shall grow exceedingly, your peace shall become perfect, your joy shall be deepened until it shall pass the heights and depths of the most intense happiness of the world, and your courage shall be a surprise to the heroes of earth. By means of a holy life your strength shall go on to mightier strength, you will advance from grace to richer grace, from glory to glory, and the brightness cast abroad by your life will shine more and more. Progress is the law of

the spiritual life. Every truth stored in the memory becomes a foundation on which to build new truths ; money gained by commerce is used to make more money ; every layer on a building is a foundation for additions toward the completion of the edifice, and every temptation overcome and every new vision of Christ become steps to lead us to the mount of holiness. Everything gained in the Christian life is a promise of greater things. It is a means to something higher. It is your duty as a Christian to be all that God intends you to be. Put your life where you will get the best of life. By living unto the Spirit you will reap eternal life ; then live in the sphere of the Spirit, for that is where you will make the most of life. It is your duty to do all that God intends you to do. Let the Holy Spirit take possession of you that you may be as a servant in His hands, going on His errands and doing the work of God in the most perfect way. Feed your soul at the feet of Christ, and let your piety manifest itself in the work of the Lord, and then shall you go from strength to strength and wax stronger and stronger.

A COMMON TASK.

A FALSE impression has been made upon many minds by the recognition of a division of the saints into ordinary and extraordinary, in-somuch that an average religious life is felt to be the common lot of Christians, and a holy life the special privilege of a few men. The Word of God teaches us that all are called to high privileges and duties. There are joys and tasks which are common to all Christians. Sometimes the common task is the greatest and noblest, as the common things of life are sometimes the most precious. We fail to appreciate the best blessings because they come to us every day. Health is not prized until we lose it, and the every-day care of God is not sufficiently recognized. The loss of a dear friend brings us to appreciate the blessing which we had all the time and did not know its value. The common things are great, and the every-day blessings are priceless when we cannot obtain them. They are valuable because of their

scarcity, and yet they were valuable all the time.

It is the common task of the Christian to be a man of prayer. To hold an audience with the Most High is not a special favor granted to a few, but is the right of all men. To be a man with the confirmed habit of prayer belongs to all Christians. This is a privilege and task common to all the saints. You may have power with God and men. You may lay hold of the feet of God. You may possess the lever which moves the world. The trail up the mount which leads to the palace of the King lies open to you. Have you learned to keep company with wrestling Jacob? Look up that you may lift men up to God.

It is the common task of every Christian to be a Bible student. It is your duty to search the Scriptures, and, as the bee, gather honey from every flower along the path. You need the truths of the Bible to nourish your spiritual life and equip you for your work as a winner of souls. We have less to fear from the critics who are laying their hands upon the Bible than from the Christians who have laid it upon the shelf. Set apart ten minutes daily for the reading of the New Testament, and before you begin to read, ask God to enable you to

realize His presence, and to give you the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide you. Then read a few verses, and at the close say to yourself, "What do these words say to me? What truth do they teach? How may I apply them in my daily life?" And finally, pray that you may be able to put into practice the lessons you have learned. If you pursue this course regularly for one year, the precious truths will become transfused into your heart and life, and you will not only find the secret of meditation, but also the delight in the law of the Lord, and the blessing of the man described by the Psalmist, who becomes like a tree planted by the water-side, will be your heritage and joy.

It is the common task of the Christian to be perfectly obedient to Christ. You are saved to serve. Obedience is the path to Christ-likeness. The slave of Christ is clothed with power. As the ambassador of a nation represents the crown and is sustained by the authority of the throne with all the military organization in force, so as the ambassador of Christ you will represent Him, and have behind you the strength of the King. It is the common task to glorify God in all things. In your daily life you may carve a statue or sweep a room for God. Touch men with the glory of divine service in taking up

the duties of your humble occupation, shining shoes, it may be, for the sake of Christ, and you will exalt your Master and win men to a life of obedience and hearty recognition of Christian faith. It is the common task of every Christian to be a holy man. You will not gain much by arguing about the doctrine of sanctification. The better task is to seek to enjoy the experience of holiness. The discovery of Christ will shatter all the ideals of your past life. When you have met Him, like Saul on His way to Damascus, the glory of God will shine in your soul and illumine your path. The common task is to do the will of God. The blessings of God always come in the path of obedience and confidence in Him. Whatever work you have to do, though you have nothing on hand, begin it, trusting to Him who will supply everything necessary as you go along. Begin your web for God and He will supply the thread. He may delay His coming to your help, but His delays are not denials. Because your lot is hard you may be tempted to think that He is dealing harshly with you, or has forgotten you, but He never intended the course of a saint to be a path of roses, else He would not have left Christ to travel in a path strewn with thorns. If you cannot sing to

bless the world you can listen, and there will come a blessing to your own heart and the singer will be encouraged and strengthened. A little bird sat in a tree in the spring-time, and as the blossoms were falling on his head, and all the birds around him were singing, he tried to sing, too, but not a note would come from his silvery throat. Then he drooped his head and said dolefully, "I cannot sing." But as the music rang out through the woods, and his heart was warmed, he lifted his head and said: "If I cannot sing, I can listen," and he was glad. You may not be able to sing as the great vocalists, but you may listen and cheer the world with the response of your heart. It is the common task to be filled with the Spirit. This is not only your privilege but it is your birth-right as a believer in Christ. Doing good is a common task. You are called to help men according to the ability God gives you. When you are in trouble and you cry to God in your distress to heal your sorrows, for the tempest not to hurt you, for hope for the dark tomorrow, for an angel to bring you freedom from the weight and pain of life, in answer to your cry He sends you back to your work, blessing men as best you can, and you are healed. You may hold back waiting for a fine opportunity

of doing some great thing, but that may never come to you. What you are able to do on some great occasion will very likely depend upon what you are, and what you are doing every day. Great lives are made up of trifles. The boy watching the steam issuing from the kettle is the father of all the machinery driven by the power of steam. Work for God and man and you shall save your life. Spend your life for self and you shall lose it; lose your life in the service of God and you shall hold a lease of it unto eternity. The duties of life are dropped upon the earth by the angels of God as grains of gold, and from them, one by one, you may mould with patient hands a crown for yourself. Every worthy act done in the name of Christ becomes a gem in your diadem awaiting you in the land of bliss.

The salvation of the world is a common task. The Gospel is for all, and it is always a stumbling-block. It is your duty to lead men to Christ. Every Christian is responsible for his share in the salvation of the world. It is a task of love to introduce men to Christ. You must needs be in a hurry about this business if you are going to bless men, for you will never find them in the same condition as you find them now. There is always pain in meeting friends

again. There is the pain of parting, but during the interval Time is busy with his fingers, and when you meet it is not with the same sympathies or sentiments. Your paths have diverged in the meantime, and you are changed by the things you have seen on the road. If you are going to win souls for God you will need to appeal to Him for wisdom and courage to enable you with a persistent faith to pursue men until you lead them to Calvary. In full surrender to God you will be able to continue this holy task, and see with eyes suffused with tears and with rapture of soul many bowing at the mercy-seat. To lead souls to the Cross is a divine task worthy of God yet committed to men.

The world must be saved by commonplace people. The common task of saving the world is to be undertaken by common men. The world is not saved by heroes. The millennium will not be ushered in by great men doing their work, but when the rank and file seize their duties with a burning passion born of the Spirit, the hosts will follow the Master's footsteps and find abiding peace. The world is worth saving. Men and women have immortal souls of priceless value, and there are no common men in the sight of God. All are precious, whether high or low, and the common things have great

value. Christ saw love and beauty and a priceless value in the common things of life. He set a high price upon the bird of air—not one of the sweet singers, or one of gorgeous plumage—but the common sparrow, which is a waif of the street. There is great need of a revival of inconspicuous work in the Church. The pressing need of the present time is individual work. It is not more conventions of Christians that is needed, but more conversations with sinners. The glamor of conspicuous work is apt to deceive you. The dull routine of life makes you feel that life is not worth living. If only a startling thing could be done it is felt that it would relieve the commonplace, but there is no brilliancy in an occasional event. The spirit in which a thing is done is the measure of its worth. It is the will of God that you should be saved in doing the work He has appointed you, and your reward will be in discovering and performing it. The common man's task is the hardest task in the world. The hero has the incentive of the applause of the world and the inspiration of a great event, but the common man must plod on from day to day in a low path through the world, performing his duty with nobody looking on and no word of encouragement from anyone. There are unknown

braves who fight in the shadow, on the battle-fields of poverty and isolation, and no human eye sees their glorious triumphs, and no flourish of trumpets salutes them. You may be tempted to think that the taking up of the cross of Christ consists in doing a great deed once in a while, whereas it is the doing of the common duties of life in a Christ-like way.

The world must be saved by persistently following the common way. The great work of saving men lifts Christians out of their commonplace lives. It dignifies themselves and their lives. God loves a hero, and so do men. We are looking for heroes and do not see them, though they are amongst us. The hero is a man who performs common tasks in a noble way. The most powerful things are the quiet forces which exert their energy and none can hear. The thunder makes a great noise, but gravitation, which is silent, is more powerful. The flash of the lightning dazzles the eyes and strikes terror to the heart, but the light is stronger and more enduring than the sudden flash. Better than the eloquent sermon is the man of holy character behind the sermon. The humblest life may be a divine life. Love ennobles the lowly, as Christ took common water and made it into wine. Take up the common task

of holiness and of the salvation of the world, and refuse not to use little things ; these may be the necessary things, for your own comfort and growth in grace as well as for the salvation of souls. The seed hidden in fruit is driven by the wind, and finding a lodging place in the soil, germinates, and grows in beauty and abundance, so the strongest principles of conduct are often born out of your sickness. From the acorn blown by the wind springs an oak which defies the storm, and from small events, simple duties and surrender to God come the strong character and likeness to Christ. A little word of yours may make some life brighter ; by your cheerful spirit and tender song you may start sweet echoes ringing in a lonely heart. By the events of every day, by the pleasures and trials of every hour, you may climb to heaven. You may be yearning and dreaming of doing good in some distant field, while weary hearts are around you longing for your sympathy and help. You may be waiting for the greatness and glory in the distance, and some day you will awake to find them all around you as you seek to bless men by your side. You can serve God by doing common actions with a heavenly grace. If you were told that you would die to-morrow what would be the best thing for

you to do? Why, just go on serving your Master as you are doing now, without altering anything. If a hand were to let down a scroll from heaven upon which was written all the future of your life, what would be the best thing to be done? Why, just go on, as now, trusting in the unseen presence of Christ, and doing your best for God and men. Think not of saving people by going to the desert, but seek them out in your own city. If you cannot help people at home you will not be able to save the heathen in a foreign land. Perform the common task in a divine way. You will not find peace by looking into your heart, but by looking to Christ. Are you willing to let Christ use you as He pleases? If not, then ask Him to make you willing and able. You will never find peace until you allow Him to have full control in the house of your heart. Don't try to arrange the rooms, making them beautiful for His residence, but give Him the key of every room, and let Him enter, and when He comes in He will sweep them clean and bring in a fulness of light, power and joy.

MEMBERS IN LAW.

THROUGHOUT the Persian Empire couriers were stationed at proper intervals to carry in haste the messages of Cyrus the King. They were justified in making requisitions from station to station of cattle, carriages or men for continuing their journey. They impressed these in the service of the king, compelling them to assist them in their work. With this fact in mind Christ said to His disciples, "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." This represents two classes of Christians—those who are impressed into Christ's service by a sense of duty, and those who serve Him from love, and do more than duty demands. The former go one mile and are the members in law of the Church; the latter go two miles or more in the service of peace, love and privilege, and are members in love. It is the extra mile which counts in all service, doing more than duty calls for, and this also is true in the cause of religion. The member in law serves

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Christ from a sense of duty, walking one mile and no more, measuring the distance and contented to perform the minimum if he will not lose heaven. Duty is the press-gang which drafts him into service. He will do as little as he can, meeting the letter of the law. He is kept more by creed and the rules of the Church than stimulated by the love of Christ. When duty is the foundation of service to Christ, the work done for God is likely to become a burden, and instead of religion being a delight it descends to drudgery. It is the difference between an act done by a happy child for his father and a hired servant. Contrast the burdens of the Pharisee with the hardships of Paul, the religious enthusiast, who rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for Christ; or the easy-going Christian, bereft of the joys of religion, and the zealous missionary, ambitious for the salvation of the heathen and the glory of God. The average Christian worker is satisfied when he has done his duty, without being anxious to make opportunities of doing good or to find out new duties. He is contented to accept the position of an errand boy in the business of religion, instead of aspiring to be a proprietor urged by a sense of his responsibility and anxious to make the most of his business. He thinks more of his ease and

comfort than of the good of men and the glory of God. The average Bible student reads a few chapters daily and in a hap-hazard way, and has not entered into that state where there is an intense love for it and a strong desire to know the will of God revealed therein. The life of a servant of God may be selfish without any feeling of condemnation, because of the ignorance of God's will. When duty compels us we are apt to give the last fruits to God and choose the first fruits for ourselves. We are like children who say, "After me and you are first." When our own wants are supplied, if there is anything to spare we are willing to give that to God, and if there is nothing left His cause must suffer. Then we admire philanthropy but are not prepared to practise it. We may sing hymns of consecration and yet know little of the spirit of the missionary picture, where an ox is standing by the altar of sacrifice and the plough for service, with the words inscribed underneath, "Ready for either." How many of us are official servants of God, ready to work in the Church when we hold an office, but silent and listless when we belong to the rank and file. We want to be apostles and not disciples of Christ, enjoying the honor of the position without the burdens of authority. We talk about our sacrifices as if

Christ were indebted to us. Let us cease our boasting and think deeply of the sacrifice of Christ for us. The average giver is a stranger to the joys of generosity. Tithing the income is a matter of duty, and is the minimum obligation, but it is the free-will offering that counts. When you have given one-tenth of your income for God, you have gone one mile, but do not stop there. Go forward in your gifts, step onward in the extra mile because the love of Christ constrains you.

The ordinary spiritual experience is like the ebb and flow of the tide, out and in, and up and down. How much do you know of the joys of religion? Do you love the house of God and hasten to it with the pleasure often expressed by the Psalmist? Are you glad when the Sabbath comes because of the opportunity of worshipping God and joining in the fellowship of the saints? If you are tardy in your attendance at the public services of the church, and are seldom found in the prayer-meeting, you are suffering from spiritual dyspepsia, and need the help of your spiritual physician. You are sick and in need of medicine. Delay not, but hasten at once to Christ for the balm of Gilead and His healing touch. Religion is duty, but it is more. Duty is an inspiring word, and there

is something ennobling in faithfulness, but a Christian must be more than faithful. Here is a clerk in a store whose duty it is to be at his place of business from eight in the morning till seven at night. He is faithful to his duties and loses not a moment. Let him give his master notice that he is going to leave in a week, and an advertisement in the newspapers will bring a dozen men well qualified to fill his place. He has not been indispensable. But let a clerk study his master's business as if it were his own, going early and late, working beyond the prescribed hours if necessary, and learning all he can about the customers and the business, and now let this young man give notice that he is going to leave, and the master cannot spare him. There is no one who can fill his place. He is more than faithful. The employer is now the servant and the clerk is master. So in the service of Christ, more and better will do. There must be more than faithfulness to duty. We must put our hearts into the work impelled by the love of Christ. Be loyal to your own Church. You may say, "I go one mile in church work." But the average Christian does so, and there are men in the world who walk as circumspectly as you do, so you must go the extra miles in holiness, in gifts and ser-

vice, and this will be your testimony that you belong to Christ's kingdom. When you are tempted to live leisurely in the service of Christ, think for one hour of the value of a human soul and the sacrifice of Christ, the great love of Christ toward you, and His call upon you to serve Him with all your heart. Humanity calls upon man to search for Andre, the explorer of the North Pole ; the British Empire calls upon the colonies for help in maintaining the cause of freedom, and God calls upon His servants to take up arms against sin, selfishness, indifference and worldliness. God is calling upon you to go freely extra miles for Him in holiness and an earnest quest for souls.

The servant of God living near to the cross knows nothing of maximum and minimum, for love has no limit, and he counts not his journeys for Christ by miles. He is a volunteer impelled by love, and not a conscript compelled by law. He lives a life of freedom and privilege. When the love of Christ constrains him, the divine force in his heart drives the machinery of his life with a regularity that is unceasing. There is no need of a look-out committee to look after those who are constrained by divine love to live and work for God. Love has no bounds. There are machines which can measure sensations of

sight and touch, but there is no method by which we can measure divine love. What a glorious privilege it is to serve the King immortal. We have the privilege of living for Him. Some count it a privilege to die for their country, and the sons of God should not less feel it to be an honor to suffer for the Kingdom of Christ. We are partners with God in building empires. Let me not live in the last year of the world, but many years before the end, that my influence may touch many lives on this side the sun, and then go onward to the undying ages of eternity. We are called to be more than ordinary Christians, going one mile. We are called to be extraordinary Christians, to go extra miles. We ought to be extraordinary in spiritual experience, in sacrifice, in giving, and in service. There is real delight in the service which is begotten by love. Duty often means difficulty, but love means ease. Timorous in the "Pilgrim's Progress" obeyed Christ through fear, and Christ rewarded him; Faithful, with delight, and Christ loved him. The citizen who pays his taxes does his duty, but he who gives beyond that from a patriotic love goes extra miles and wins the hearts of the nation. And in religious life it is the man who does more than his duty who touches the souls of his fellowmen. The reward

of the service of love is found in the peace and joy abiding in our hearts and the growing likeness to Christ. Love shapes the life and brings it into harmony with Christ. Souls won from sin and placed in the hands of God are an ample reward for all the service we can render. There is a contagion in this service of love by which others are stirred to work for God. We need this love for our work. The artisan is proud of his labor, toiling hard from morn till night for the pleasure there is in it. We need men of the Edison stamp of soul in spiritual work, who concentrate all their powers upon their task, which ceases to be a task and becomes a thing of beauty because of the love we bear toward it. Have you found out the secret of happy service, the joy of going extra miles? If you have no love for your vocation for Christ, pray for it. Wait at the feet of the Master in faith until you are filled with the Spirit. There is a power behind the throne which will lead you on to victory. Get into closer touch with Christ. Seek to be impressed by love rather than duty. Then your religion will be one of gladness and power.

THE SERVANT OF SMALL THINGS.

LONGING for a large place and bidding for position is a form of selfishness which attacks many Christian hearts. Ignorance of our own qualifications to fill acceptably the large place does not hinder us from yearning after it. Satan wanted heaven, and Alexander the Great was not contented with less than the whole world, and we are anxious to be installed in lofty places where we may admire and be admired. This would not be so bad were it not that the lowly sphere is left unfilled by us, while we are waiting to occupy the larger place. This is like the folly of the farmer who neglects to till his ten-acre field until he owns one hundred acres, or the private soldier who refuses to fight while the enemy is advancing unless he is made a general. This is presumption and not faith. It is quite legitimate for us to be anxious about getting things, as we are made for conquest, but we may acquire only to destroy, as the riches of the miser corrode his heart and dwarf his life,

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Now, the divine sphere is always large. Where God is can never be small. According to the law of progress, when a man fills his place, he finds the place has grown, or it is a door which opens into another sphere. If the visitor in the Catacombs stays in one spot he will not see the wonders of the unexplored territory ; if the mind stops learning it becomes dwarfed, and if a man ceases to work for God he will not only lessen his joy, but his talents will shrink and their natural growth be lost, for "from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The divine sphere is always large enough for you, for in it there lies expansion. A small corner in Asia was large enough for the deepest thinker the world has ever known. Kant, the great German philosopher, was never twenty-five miles from home, yet his system of thought has travelled round the world. Every seed of truth you drop into a human heart will reach other hearts, and every word and act has wings which carry it to earth's remotest bounds. The influence of our lives is borne by unseen hands to future generations.

There should be a wise contentment with the sphere, but not with the manner in which you fill it. Fill your place and God will have

another waiting for you. Be not dissatisfied, but be unsatisfied with your lot. Do not be passively contented, sitting with folded hands, but be actively contented, working with all your might. Pray for a fair wind to carry your craft across the lake, but keep plying your oars as you pray. Pray for a revival, but do not retard it by neglecting to speak to men about their personal salvation. God always honors the faith which prays and works at the same time. Christ honors the servant of inconspicuous work by saying, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." Small duties are often the most important. The foundation of a building is not as conspicuous as the granite pillars of the porch, but quite as necessary. The faith and prayers of the congregation are unseen by the strangers who worship in the church, but they are more important than the eloquent sermon of the preacher. There are small things in the service of God which maintain the larger things visible to men. Work for God is never small or inconspicuous. It may be unnoticed by men, but it is seen by God. Whatever He sees in us that is Christ-like is great, and everything done for Him with a holy purpose is noble. A cup of cold water is not much, but given in His name is a gift honored in heaven

and rewarded on earth. Sir Launfal went to the Holy Land to find the Holy Grail, but he found Christ in the leper crouching by his castle gate, and when he had shared with him his mouldy crust of bread, he kept the Holy Supper, for as Lowell says :

“ Not what we give, but what we share—
For the gift without the giver is bare ;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me.”

A word spoken to a struggling soul may seem little, but it may save a life. Small things are conspicuous when God sees and approves them.

The minutest portion of a great work is helpful to the whole. A bit of unslacked lime may destroy a palace. A great picture is made up of numerous faint lines which are necessary for the harmony of the scene. Your life consists of single thoughts, emotions, words and deeds, without which it would not be. The beautiful stained glass window of mosaic is made up of small pieces of colored glass, and a beautiful life is built up of single acts of devotion, small in themselves, but necessary for the growth of the Christ-life. One of the greatest temptations of life is for us to live on exhibition. We are made a spectacle unto angels and men, but this is base when we are seeking to parade

our virtue and make our righteousness a glittering show. To be a martyr, a witness for the truth, when duty demands it, is commendable, but to seek martyrdom or court persecution is sinful. The servant of the great things is apt to feel that these are the only things which exist and are worthy of his notice, forgetting that all things great and small are part of one mighty whole. The system of the world is one. The universe is dovetailed by divine skill. The human race is of one blood, members one of another. The problems of Newton and the discoveries of Faraday are dependent upon the cook. No man is isolated, and he lives not unto himself. Your life is linked with God and man by a series of acts which some of the greatest intellects fail to grasp, and the child and savage is able to understand. Greatness consists in the aggregation of minuteness. Single grains of sand form the mountain, single acts unite a life. The smallest things enter into the constitution of the noblest men, and by these their lives are formed.

We can say with Mahomet, "God alone is great." With Him a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. A sparrow falls not unnoticed to the ground, and a man is worth more to Him than all the material

world. There is nothing little in the sight of God of all that He has made. In a single drop of water there is a host of living creatures, and on some of these there is a yet more tiny parasite. The true thing is the great thing. Love and all that the spirit of love begets is great in His view. The highest in His sight is not material acquisition, the castle, the mines and the vessels, but the pure heart, the holy life, the godly purpose, and the faithful trust. Man counts that great which exalts him above his fellows—wealth and the power it can purchase. The things which attract public notice are the things we most highly esteem. There is a glowing report of a passing evangelist, while the steady and more enduring work of the faithful pastor is ignored. The great convention is rated high, while the earnest Sunday School teacher is passed by, and yet he may be doing the greater work. This is all wrong. That is great in man which is most like God, and what he does in harmony with the divine will is always great. The work and life which is most God-like is certainly greater, if it be larger, than the small work and life of the same nature. Magnitude is not a matter of bulk, but of endurance, freedom from error, and holy intention. Peter the Apostle was a greater man than Nero

the Emperor of Rome. A multitude of noble things included in one is great, and the larger the number in unity the greater. The lowliest man may do greater things than the man in an exalted position who is inspired to act from a desire for glory. Not what we get but what we give makes us great. The small act of kindness is larger than the large event of selfishness. Love to God and man has in it eternal elements, and accomplishes more than love to self. The small act performed in the spirit of Christ does more than the large act done in our own name, and is therefore more noble.

The servant of small things is faithful in the small sphere. He is also faithful in the large place. The small sphere, however, is his delight, and faithfulness in that is his forte. Because of this he is always in demand. It is not ability alone that makes the great man, but earnestness joined to ability. The finely constructed machine with little steam is not so effective as the one in a less state of perfection with an abundance of power. Ability joined with earnestness is better than ability alone. We prize the servant of small things, the one who attends to details, picking up the trifles everybody drops, and putting away the articles everyone else forgets. It is she who discovers

the misplaced book and makes ready the chair and footstool for the visitor. The servant of small things has discovered the method of putting the heart as well as the hands into her work. This is the kind of man needed in the Church. This is the one who is always found at the prayer-meeting, and is ever in his pew on rainy days. He is not able to address large assemblies, and cannot contribute much toward the financial support of the Church, but he gives gladly what he has in kind, loving and helpful words, is always ready for any service, and what he does is thoroughly done. He has an affection for the least, finding pleasure in attending to the things which others do not see or are careless about. He is found waiting upon Christ when the multitudes have forsaken Him, and at the Cross you may see him among the sorrowing few, though he may be absent when the crowd is pressing the Master on His triumphal entry into the Holy City. He loves to see things done in a perfect manner. This is the spirit of the artist who seeks perfection through special attention to minor details.

The servant of small things is faithful in the small courtesies of life. He is careful of others, always ready with a shake of the hand and a kind word, watching for opportunities of help-

fulness. He is the Life Guardsman in the Church and society. When hearts are weary he pays a loving visit to encourage. A steady friend always, he is loyal to men from love to Christ, maintaining a Christian attitude, showing respect toward each and all. He works for God without any thought of applause or recognition from the Church or the world, simply content to do his duty, with the desire for the recognition and approval of God. Sometimes he is a missionary plodding away on an isolated station, or a member of a congregation hidden from the view of the world, or even the worshippers in his own Church, where he works hard in his own sphere for the glory of God. The work that is inconspicuous to the world may be conspicuous to God. This servant is only anxious to know that there is a work of God to be done, and then he will set about doing it with all his might. It is not always the place that seems the most prominent that is the most influential. There were no ladies in Russia held in greater honor by the Czar and his brothers than the humble English governess who had taught them in their youth. When she died in the winter palace in St. Petersburg, they followed her remains on foot, and with their own hands lowered the coffin into the

grave, and as the clods of earth fell the Czar shed tears of sorrow. Constant love had wrought what social position failed to accomplish. In all great and true work nothing comes by chance. The work of God is not done by accident. Usually chance is chaos, and purpose is order and helpfulness. Nothing must be done from contention. We must never preach Christ through jealousy, but always in love, with sincerity and purity of motive.

The commonplace things demand our constant attention. It is these which often minister the most to men. The whistle of the urchin on the street revives memories of our childhood, and the simple deed of kindness often remains as a benediction when the great events are forgotten. It is attention to the little things that makes us great. You are called to minister in the least things. It is easy to be a servant of great things. It is not so difficult to be a hero on the field of battle as to exhibit heroism in daily life at home. Faithfulness in the least things is the need of the Church. Stand at the smallest post keeping guard for God. Seek not high places, but strive to be faithful in the lowly place. A word for Christ, a short prayer, a simple testimony may prove a great blessing to many souls.

Work for God in any sphere will receive its due reward. The faithful soul will be blest with authority and influence. In your own heart you will have peace and joy, and not only will you grow, but you will have the satisfaction of helping others. Whatever you do with your best force, whether baking a loaf or moulding a statue, will be acceptable to Him. The noble act is that which is performed as Christ would have done it.

“ Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.”

The servant of small things is a servant all the time. He withholds nothing from God, but leaves all to Him and does the best he can. Nothing less than your best for God should satisfy you. As Turner said of art, “Whatsoever you do, large or small, do it wholly; take a slight subject if you will, but don't leave things out”—so, be thorough in all work for God. With a deep and intense love for it, which is the secret of all genuine work, be faithful in the least things as well as the highest, for faithfulness is all. Whether you dwell in a shanty or a palace, be faithful, for that is the chief merit of what is done for God; and being faithful in the very little, you shall be faithful also in much.

THE BEST YET.

THERE is an intense hunger of the heart for success in life. In youth the eyes are ever lifted toward the top of the mountain. If we fall as we climb, and are blinded by the drifting snow, we lie with our heads toward the summit. God has made each of us for success and not for defeat. Out of our greatest defeats oftentimes come our most significant victories. The highest success lies in the realm of spiritual experience. The lowest success is the attainment of high position by means of great talents and energy without any thought of God or good to men. A tree may be large, but if it has neither foliage nor fruit, no beauty of structure or value as timber, it cannot be said to be of any significance; and you may fill a large place in the world, but if no one is blest by your life you have lived in vain. Your soul is made to crave after God as your body craves for food, and the pain of hunger which you feel in your soul is the benediction of God by which you are saved from spiritual suicide. Stones have been

given to you for the purpose of building a beautiful palace for God, but you have placed them on the floor and not in the walls, and they have become stumbling-blocks instead of polished stones. That success which leads you away from God's purpose for you is the success most to be dreaded in this world. The secret of spiritual success is found in the highest living for God. You have been blest with the promise of the presence of Christ in every work, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and these are elements of power which, if used by you, will lift you to the highest places in the kingdom of God. Without these you can never rise to the highest life. It would be just as easy to reap a harvest of wheat by neglecting to sow, or by sowing the seeds of the thistle, as to find likeness to Christ without communion with Him, and the prayerful study of the Bible, by which the Holy Spirit will reveal to you the deep things of the divine will. The secret of spiritual beauty is not a cosmetic applied to the soul, but the infusion of the spirit of Christ into the heart and life. The source of spiritual strength is not in the leisure and ease of religious service, but in the healthy exercise of sanctified talents. Religion is more than medicine; it is food for the nourishment of the soul. Linked with Christ

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you will be raised to Alpine heights of holiness, where the glory of the summer sun will shed its radiance on nature and man, and your soul will be aglow with the strength which comes from climbing, and the peace which flows from dwelling with Him in heavenly places.

The low aims of the servants of Christ account for their poverty of soul. They have not found delight in God. They are contented to remain half way up the mountain among the cold mists which hang on its sides, instead of climbing to the top, where the air is pure and bracing and there is continual pleasure. Your whole life should be consecrated to great designs for the good of men and the glory of God. It is better to build locomotives than manufacture toys. You are called to great things. Build your palace on the hill rather than in the valley. Claim the world for Christ, and not a tribe or nation, so shall you be more in harmony with His will. Work for the spiritual good of men, and be not content to minister alone to the growth of muscle. Seek for yourself the largest and most precious gifts of God. Do not settle down to low aims in the spiritual life. Strive to possess the ripest fruits in the garden of Christ. There are traits of holiness which you have seen in others, and you have longed to enjoy them, but

you have not followed the path to the treasure-house of the King, where these are laid ready for your coming, and so you are a stranger to the holy temper of the saints. Your Father is keeping great and glorious things for you, and it should be the highest ambition of your life to secure them. How can the best things of God be obtained and enjoyed? The Psalmist gives the true answer: "Delight thyself also in the Lord." Run into His presence as a happy child and you will find them placed in order by a loving hand ready for you to take them. It is one of the surprises of grace that God forgets your sins and holds in His hands His best things, that when you go to Him with a thankful heart He answers your gratitude by throwing into your lap His choicest gifts.

God wants your best. He wishes you to be at your best, and He knows that you cannot become so by yourself, so He gives you helpers in people who are better than you are yourself. Your best is drawn out of you by those who are superior to you in holiness. A godly man is always an inspiration. Your heavenly Father wants you at your best in the world, and to enable you to be at your best He has given Christ to mould you into His own likeness. God calls you to be better than you are. He

desires you to give Him your strongest affection and deepest reverence, that you may grow like Him. As a wise teacher ennobles his pupils by demanding the best they can give, your Father is not satisfied with less than your best, for highest living will expand your powers, and the noblest daring will bring out the heroic elements hidden in your hearts. Christ wants your best. He claims the firstling of the flock and the finest of the wheat. Your treasures may be few, and there may not be a ruby or diamond among them, but He is well content with the best of your poverty if it is wrapped in love. You may not have many talents, but He asks not great gifts. The feeble service of a weak saint, if he can give no more, is a precious jewel in the sight of Christ. Weak lungs may not preach with a loud voice the everlasting gospel, but your feeble voice may lisp the Saviour's name, and the whisper will find wings to reach the ear of the loving Christ. The highest talents, if tarnished with sin, will never find a place in the divine treasury, while the humblest gifts, sustained with self, will surpass in beauty the treasures of the wise men of old at the manger-throne. Christ wants the best you have of love and service.

The world wants your best. The world is

sorry when you cease to be a Christian, for though it may not follow your godly example, it respects a noble life. A nation cannot afford to be without men of prayer. The man on the top of the mountain is ever a necessity. As well might a vessel cross the ocean without a rudder as a commonwealth be governed without religion. Righteousness is as necessary for the building of a city as for the making of a saint. Character is the foundation of the State as well as of the Church. The world wants you to live the holiest life possible, for it cannot afford to lose its ideals of holiness. If you throw away the principles of Christ and lower the standard of holiness, you will impoverish the nation, and iniquity will corrupt its institutions and degrade its men until darkness will fall upon a forsaken people. Do your best for God. Let your ambition be to burn out for God rather than to rot with indifference. As the master artist concentrates all his powers upon a great picture, and is never satisfied with doing less than his abilities and industry can perform, so should you set before yourself the task of manifesting Christ in the most beautiful modes, that men may be drawn toward Him and be charmed with the perfection of His life. Let the task of every hour be a work of love. Let every word

and act of your life be the adding of a fresh touch to the picture of your Master. Never be satisfied with any work you are doing for God if you can do it better. As a mechanic is not able to make an engine without the mechanical instinct or training, so you will not be able to manifest Christ and to make your life a picture of the great life, unless you have the picture engraven on your heart. If Christ abides not in your soul, you will not be able to show Him in your life. There must be apple sap in the roots, trunk and branches of the tree before there will be apples on the boughs, and Christ must be in the heart before Christ will be in the life. Let Christ set up His throne in the empire of your soul and allow Him to have full control, and then you will find delight in doing your best for God and have power to work and live for Him. Do your best for man. Give yourself royally to your fellowmen. Do not set yourself up as a standard for them to follow. No man can be trusted unless he can make mistakes and knows he is capable of making them. Let a man insist that he is always correct, and you may be sure that the average man is more accurate than he in his statements and life. Never be ashamed to acknowledge your faults. It is a good sign when a man is capable of being ashamed, and the worst of men is he who is willing to be seen

at his worst. You have been blest with the glorious opportunity of revealing Christ to men. We honor the explorer who makes known to us new lands, discovers new truths, or places old truths in the freshness of a new setting ; and the Christian is an explorer who has found Christ and enjoys the high privilege of putting Christ before men. The opportunity of discovering Christ and bringing Him into the hearts and lives of men is an infinite privilege, for there are unlimited possibilities for the man who accepts Christ as his Saviour, Teacher and Friend. Give to men the best you have and it will return to you. Every man's heart is a whispering gallery which always speaks the truth. Sing a song of love, and it will flow along the corridors of his thoughts and feelings until it reaches his soul, and it will return as a joyous echo to your own soul. Have faith in men and they will trust you ; give your best affections to them and they will love you ; despise them and they will hate you ; show them Christ, and He will come back to you out of their hearts with tears in His eyes or a smile of love upon His face.

Your best is not too good for God. You are working for a King, and the best you can do still seems too imperfect to present to Him. You are purveyor to His Divine Majesty by letters patent. Dignify yourself and your trade

by making it a special work for God. The humblest service becomes the noblest service if inspired by the spirit of Christ. The best you can give to God will not enrich Him, but it will satisfy His heart. You may build a house for man, but you must erect a palace for God. This palace is not made of marble or granite, but of Christ-like deeds, and the poorest may build the noblest structure which will gladden the heart of the King. Let God make the best of you. In His workshop of the world He takes men and women and shapes their souls as time chisels their faces, fashioning them by His providence and spirit into a beauty that is all His own. Sometimes you will see the marred soul of a follower of Christ, which is no credit to the artist's skill, but you must not blame the divine handicraft, for in the making the saint moved and drew himself out of the hands of the Master. Perfect beauty alone can come through perfect submission to the purpose and working of God. If you would be perfect let God have full control of your heart and life. He can make you a strong and beautiful saint if you will allow Him to have His own way with you. He will perfect His image in you if you will permit Him. Will you put yourself in His hands to fashion you into His own likeness, and make you noble as one of the greatest on earth? Let

God take the best out of you. The heart of every man is an undiscovered country which no mortal can explore to its utmost limits. There are treasures untold and mines of great wealth deep in the human heart, which God alone can reveal, and until He enters and lays bare the abundant riches no man can discover the best that is hidden, and if He is not permitted to do this work of discovery, then the noblest man can never have the best that is in him brought to light. Every man falls short of his highest possibilities if the divine digger is not permitted to pursue unhampered His work of discovery in the heart. Let God enter your mind and soul, that night and day He may unfold your powers. There are seeds of love and truth lying dormant in your brain and heart, awaiting the coming of God that He may touch them and they may awaken to life and beauty. Let God touch your inner nature with His finger and set free the glories in embryo lying there.

Seek your highest pleasures in God. Delight in the Lord. There is no joy to be compared to the joy found in fellowship with the great and good. The joy attending the forgiveness of sins introduces the soul into a region of pure and unlimited delight, where conscience has no stings and disease does not follow indulgence.

In the company of Christ you will find higher delights than the world can bestow. Let no stain come upon your soul by indulgence in sinful pleasure. A snake may have a beautiful skin, but it is not wise to make a companion of such a dangerous foe, and there are pleasures which may be painted in beautiful colors, but there is evil hidden under the paint. Live at your best. You will not render service to anyone by parting with your best. Be a Christian in all companies, and make no concessions to customs in which your Master is not held in great honor. Live up to the best that is in you. Live a noble life in whatever condition you may be. A monument may be raised for one who is made famous by its erection, while another statue may become famous because of the greatness of the man whom it commemorates; so live that the strength and beauty of your life will grace any structure or institution. The grandest monument which can be raised to your memory, though of polished marble, cannot surpass that human monument of souls won from sin by your efforts and example, for this shall abide when time has worn the marble into dust, and your name on earth is forgotten. Live at your best in everything and everywhere. Do common things in a perfect manner, and men will glorify God for the beauty of a holy life.

God will give you His best. "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." He never forgets the needs of His children: the sun never stops in his regular course, the hour of temptation finds the necessary grace, the weary saint rests in the everlasting arms, and the traveller in the valley of death sees the hand in the cloud stretched forth to lead him through the gates of the eternal city. The best of God is always progressive. He gave His Son for sinners, and with Him all things needful for your salvation. He has sent love as a messenger to open the doors of the divine treasury one by one, that as you need the blessings of the day, you may enter and take what is best for the circumstance and hour. As you grow in holiness you will be able to see the inner chambers one by one, and receive strength to climb the steps where the rarest gifts are placed. God gives His best for your best. His best is sometimes sickness and sorrow, for out of the trial comes beauty of soul, and temptation is the divine process of polishing men and bringing them into a nobler life. Christ will give His best to you. He takes the heart you offer Him, and fills it with His own beauty, peace and joy. He makes your strength increase and calls you to greater achievements in his service. The Holy Spirit gives His best. He guides the young disciple along an easy

path, most fitting for his feet, and as he grows in wisdom and grace, He leads him into more difficult ways, which are needful for himself and the world. The best of God is better than the best of the world. The pleasures of the world attain their climax in a single experience, and then begin to wane until they have vanished, just as a flower reaches perfection in an instant and then begins to fade. The joys of the spiritual life, however, go on increasing in power, until in the land of everlasting delight they reach a height of perfection unknown on earth. The best life is found in the highest living for God. Living in constant fellowship with Him you will be transformed into beauty, and you will learn that a holy life is the best life. Fullness of life comes to him who enjoys the constant vision of the Cross and sees the face of God every day. For you in Christ there is an inheritance beyond earth and the stars, which is so great that tongue cannot express its glory, and the imagination staggers at the conceptions of eternal bliss. Let Christ take out the best that lies hidden within you. Do your best for Him. Press all you can of true service into your short life, and all life will be purer and stronger for your highest devotion and likeness to Christ,

THE FINISHED LIFE.

JESUS was a young man when He died. Had one of His companions been telling the story of His death, he would have said, "What a pity it was that He died so young. We have lost much by His unfinished life. Had He lived till He was seventy years of age, He would have done many great and noble things which He lived not to do." Yet Christ said of His life and work, "It is finished." There was no unfinished work for Christ on earth. It was finished in quantity; nothing was left unaccomplished. It was finished in quality; there were no defects and imperfections in it. No man can speak of his life and work as Christ did, yet there is a sense in which every true man can say as the artists do of their paintings, "It is finished." Your life and work are not completed as a race. Life is a race that is finished on earth, but it is a trial race. It is a battle that is ended, but that is only one aspect of life. Man is immortal, and there is no end to an immortal race. It is never

finished. Your life is not finished in the sense of being polished on the outside, as a marble statue, for we are more than blocks of stone; we are more than temples cold and bare; we are immortals, with the blood of kings in our veins, and an eternal destiny.

Your life, however, may be finished when it is founded upon truth and regulated by it. Your character may be finished as a sword, hammered and welded and fitted for service, though the exterior may not have a shining surface. It may be unfinished, as a sword imperfectly made which excels in a surface polish. There is a true and a false finish. The saint is finished, the hypocrite is polished. A true life is finished, a false life is polished. One of the marks of a finished life is its proportion. It is more than symmetrical, which, according to Ruskin, is the balance of opposite sides, whereas proportion is division upwards. A beautiful life is proportional, a sweet simplicity and harmony with the will of God, and the thoughts, desires and expressions rising toward heaven. It is a strong life, having a place for every ornament!

“Unity, mystery, majesty, grace,
Stone upon stone, and each stone in its place.”

Honest Old Time shows us that if your

temple be large it must be bare ; if it be finished and elegant, it must be small. A beautiful life has no sharp angles. As the lines in a beautiful picture seem continuous, the curves gently melting into one another, so the lines of spiritual beauty are gentle curves without any sharp angles. It is the sharp angles that keep many souls from being more beautiful than they are. Rudeness in manner and speech, abrupt, ill-timed and misplaced goodness, make it seem less than it is, and it often seems not at all good. Quick tempers, harsh speeches, and fits of goodness which begin and end abruptly, lessen the beauty of your work and life. If you were to visit the factory where alpaca cloth is made, you would see a man passing the cloth over rollers, by which he is able to detect any flaws in it, as the light reflected from the window falls upon it, and whenever he finds a bad place he will deduct something for it from the pay of the person who made it. He is engaged in the process of examination, which is known as peaking. When the character of anyone in the factory is not what it should be the workers say, "He won't stand peaking." If our lives are what they ought to be in the sight of God, they will stand peaking, but if not, the peaking will reveal the defects, and we must suffer deduc-

tion in a holy influence, and in the peace which abides in our hearts. Spiritual beauty belongs to the whole life. There is nothing too great or too small to form the part of a beautiful life. The smallest things are made great, the least comely things become beautiful by the beautiful soul with which they are done, or enjoyed or endured. A complete life in Christ is a holy life. Wholeness in the life is healthfulness and holiness. A finished life is a thing of beauty. It possesses eternal grace because there is internal sweetness. The actions of every day are the fruits of the aspirations of the soul. The graces which are seen are the flowers, which are of the nature of the sap of the plant, which is not seen. Beauty is seen because it is first unseen in the thoughts and desires. The Christian life is beautiful that is sustained by fellowship with God.

A finished life is marked by purity. Purity of life depends upon purity of heart. A holy life is sustained by a heart that is controlled by unadulterated motives and desires, that is unmixed with sin, having a single aim for the glory of God, and a holy purpose in blessing men. It is marked by humility, yielding an earthly position for a heavenly influence, giving up your own rights for the sake of others, and

selecting the company of God's worthies who are men of character, in preference to men of the world who are distinguished by worldly position yet may be lacking in virtue. It is marked by that charity which thinketh no evil and therefore cannot speak evil of others. It is marked by repose. Faith in God imparts a sturdiness to the life, and creates in the heart a courage and heroism that frowns upon worry and laughs at fear. It adds a dignity to the life which flows from the consciousness of your relationship to God. As you have admired the repose of the statue, the absence of fear, the ease and dignity shown in the countenance and attitude of the figure, so you have been compelled to admire the repose of the saint, who is heroic in happiness, and maintains an attitude of righteous defiance in trial which is more than passive submission. This godly repose in great sorrow is the Christian's secret, which compels the admiration of the wicked. The finished life is one of apparent carelessness. The saint is not so much concerned about the externals of religion as he is about the internals. Forms of religion are important, but when the heart is centred upon God there is apt to be an apparent carelessness about ceremonies. Salvation by faith is not so careful about the appearances of

the religious life as salvation by works. The hypocrite must look well to his religious mask, for that is all he has ; but the saint looks to his inner life, and if his heart is right the fruits of righteousness will be seen.

In every finished life there should be a design of what the life is going to be, and definite and earnest labor to secure that end. The failure and success of life depend in a great measure upon the design of each human architect. In the general design of life there is required of each man a true conception of life in the world and a plan of the part he is going to take in it. Every man is an artist. His thoughts and acts are the figures in the painting, and his whole life is the picture when it is finished. What is your plan of life? Is it broad and beautiful, or narrow, bigoted and coarse? Each finished life is the expression of the intention of the saint working in harmony with God. His purpose is to bring all his thoughts into harmony with the divine will, and his whole life is made subject to God. When the holy intentions are expressed his life is finished. As Rembrandt said in relation to art, "A picture is finished when a painter has expressed his intention ;" so in relation to character. Holy thoughts are expressed in the life

by words and deeds. The draughtsman has in his mind the model of the ship before it is placed on paper, and the saint must have a purpose before his life shall assume the true form of godliness. A finished life, then, consists in the completeness of the expression of holy purposes. It is not the smoothing and polishing that enhances its value. Labor is bestowed to make it better without any regard to applause or approval of its external beauty. All true finish lies in adding more to the life; as Ruskin puts it: "All true finish is added fact; and Turner's word for finishing a picture was always this significant one, 'Carry forward.'" More truth to the life constitutes spiritual finish. Whatever you may do in relation to the beauty of your character may be complete for time, but it is incomplete for eternity, as you are only beginning your real life when you pass through death into the larger life of heaven. Length of years is not necessary to add strength and beauty. Some of the noblest spirits have ended their course under forty years of age. John Summerfield, the pulpit orator; John Hunt, the zealous missionary of Fiji; F. W. Robertson, the prince of expositors, and Robert Murray McCheyne, the gifted soul-winner, were saintly souls who passed away from earth

before they had reached the age of forty. Some lives are finished, and yet there exists a consciousness that their work is not ended. Neander, the famous church historian, spent his last hours upon his great work by the aid of an amanuensis, and, with a "Good-night" upon his lips sank into sleep, to awaken in glory, his earthly labor ended, but his powers not destroyed, having exchanged this fragmentary state for the activity of heaven, of which this earthly life is only the beginning. Every finished life is still a growing life. As a perfect flower may grow larger, so a beautiful life may go on increasing in size and loveliness. The true life is the saint's expression of God. Every tint of justice, humility and love in his life is taken from the justice, humility and love of God. True greatness lies in a soul which knows God and is faithful to duty. He is noblest who thinks most nobly. A peasant of mean garb may be a poet translating for God the hymn of nature that men may read. As you grow beautiful by contemplating God and holding high fellowship with Him, you may also gather beauty from association with those who are most like Him. An artist may make a composite picture of female excellence by taking the superior points in many pictures and combining them, and as

you associate with those who are noblest you may grow in spiritual beauty by uniting in your own life the graces of your friends. A life spent fully in agreement with God is a finished life, and that is most highly finished which is in complete harmony with the divine will, and expresses most clearly and fully all that is in Christ.

Every human life is a picture upon which two artists have been engaged. The making of a man has in it divine and human elements, God and man working together for salvation. The Creator supplies the materials for the perfecting of life and character. Body, intellect and soul are made by the Master of man and the world, and the mysterious law of heredity touches the whole of this human trinity. Close at hand there lie materials in nature and men, in books and daily work, in circumstances and divine influences. Out of these materials you may build a palace beautiful which God will find delight in. On an old farm you may see a beautiful mansion erected from the boulders which lay embedded in the soil, the land improved by their removal, and the house an ornament to the farm; so you may use the stern, homely and unpromising facts of your life, and transform them into edifices of utility and palaces of

beauty. God is the finisher of your palace beautiful. He fills up the spaces in your life with Himself. By His providence he enlarges your life and deepens your thought. He transforms your troubles by His presence, changing your sorrow into joy. When Christian faith and love come into your heart a new spirit enters your life full of the romance of Heaven. Not in single heroic deeds does there lie the great glory of your life, but in living all your life in an exalted spirit.

“The humblest life that lives may be divine :
Christ changed the common water into wine.
Star-like comes Love from out the magic East—
And Life, the hermit, finds his fast a feast.”

God finishes our lives by filling our hearts with His Spirit. It is He who guides us into ways of peace through the intricate mazes of life ; it is He who illuminates the soul in the darkest hour, chasing away fear ; and it is He who sustains when the burdens and cares oppress us. God finishes our lives by His continual indwelling. Beauty of character is internal. It is not thin veneer, but solid work. The exterior finish is the expression of the interior excellence. It is the soul of beauty which alone can create the form of beauty. Masks of goodness may be ever so lovely, but

they cannot deceive men, and in the sight of God they will disappear.

A finished life is in great part hidden from the world. The delicate finish and endless detail are unseen by human vision. Much of the finest work of Turner's drawings cannot be traced except by the aid of a magnifying glass, and the noble thoughts and many of the inspiring words and deeds of good men and women are not recorded, but are forgotten or unobserved, yet though hidden from men they are real and true. But a truly good life cannot be hidden altogether. The beauty of the soul shines through the thickest veil. The lines and tints of beauty which are added to your soul enrich your life, and enable you by your example and influence to be of more worth and service to the world. Christ's life is the one life of supreme finish. Solid, harmonious and true, it shone upon the world, imparting wisdom and grace to all who came under its power. No truly great man can be named in religion but it is that of one who finished his life to the utmost. The snail shells on the ground in Titian's picture of the Entombment were exquisitely traced, and Leonardo drew every several vein in the little agates and pebbles of the gravel which lay under the feet of St. Anne, as

may be seen in the picture in the Louvre. These artists strove to the utmost to attain the perfection which hand and brain could reach. What Leonardo did in art, and Tennyson in poetry, McCheyne and Fletcher did in holiness of character. Finish your life by imitating Christ. Look at Him, study Him, follow Him to the utmost. Be a master in holiness, and be not satisfied with less than the noblest—and that is found by imitating Christ.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR.

FEAR NOT was one of the great utterances of Christ to His disciples. He knew the value of fearlessness to men, and urged them to be men of faith, possessed of the spirit of the martyrs, that they might laugh at danger and do their duty. Men are called to climb the Alps of daily duty, and courage is one of the virtues which will help them. It is always the fearless men who have great work in the world. Courage is seen not only on the battlefield, but in the pulpit, in home life, in suffering, in daily drudgery. It is shown in bearing defeat without a murmur, in parents giving their lives for their children, and in devotion to work. Chrysostom defied a vindictive emperor and empress; Basil pleaded before Valens, the persecutor, in behalf of the persecuted; Huss put an emperor to shame, Savonarola protested against the immorality of Florence, and Wesley denounced the impurity of England. But courage is seen in the lower walks of life, where the multitude

knows nothing of the contest and sees not the victory. Happiness is dependent upon fearlessness. The motto of the true optimist is, "All can be, and therefore shall be, well."

There is need of fearlessness in the hour of temptation, standing for the right and delivering your message to the world, when friends are entreating you to conform to custom and enemies are frowning upon you. You need the courage of the martyrs to-day. You are not called upon to meet the rack and the stake, and you are not thrust into the den of lions, still you require the patience of Job and the courage of Daniel. Your enemies are worldliness and selfishness. You are in danger of lingering in Vanity Fair. Sin is here to-day, but, like all civilizations, it has changed in appearance. It is dressed in the garb of the age and the society. The fear of God is good, but there is a false fear which begets craven looks and gives a sense of failure. Fear in religion may be worthy or ignoble. Shylock's fears were for his pocket; Paul's fears were for his soul. True religion begets fear, but not insanity—the Church is not the vestibule to the asylum.

False fear is caused by looking at self and lack of faith in God. It is the privilege of the Christian to enjoy freedom from fear. He can

look on the bright side of life. Freedom from fear is the slogan of reform. The secret of happiness lies in faith and love, which beget fearlessness. It is love that begets courage. Rosea, the Saracen maid, left her home in the Holy Land through love of Gilbert Becket, and pursued her weary way through strange lands with only two words upon her lips, "Gilbert" and "London." Despite innumerable difficulties she reached the great city and found her lover. The Saracen maid became the mother of Thomas à Becket, the famous chancellor, archbishop and martyr. Love gave her courage. So does the love of Christ beget fearlessness, and by its help you may defeat sin and win victories for the truth. The gospel of good cheer is your heritage. You need not fail, but if you must fail in life's battle you can at least fall with a smile on your face.

The affectionate regard of Christ ensures protection, guidance and strength in your strife with the world. He extends His sympathy toward you in words and deeds surpassing the sympathy of father and mother for their sick child. It is more than pity; it is love. He knows your sins, your weakness, your temptations, your circumstances, your foes. The poet and naturalist are in sympathy with nature,

Christ with man. He has a fellow-feeling for you. He is of kin with you. He is the kinsman of the human race. Shakespeare's greatness lies in his sympathy with things and men outside of himself. But Christ is supreme in this, He sympathised with men in matters of which He had no personal experience. He sympathized with sinners, and He was not a sinner. He knew what sin was, but not by personal experience. This is greatness. You can have a fellow-feeling with a man in circumstances through which you have passed, but how can you do this in trials of which you know nothing by experience? Yet this is what Christ has done. His fellow-feeling is so true that He can hear the beats of your heart and count the sighs before they reach your lips. The physician puts the stethoscope to the body of the patient to convey to his ear the sound which tells him of its condition; but the divine stethoscope is the heart of Christ. His sympathy toward you is active. A vizier was condemned by his master to perpetual captivity in a lofty tower. His wife took a live black beetle, and after placing some buffalo butter on the top of his head, fastened a silken thread around his body and put him on the wall of the tower. Attracted by the smell of the butter which he thought was always ahead of

him, he climbed till he reached the window, where the vizier took the silken thread. He then drew up the packthread by means of the silk, next a small cord, and finally a rope, by means of which he escaped. Christ comes to you in active sympathy, and when He finds you imprisoned, He stands not outside the walls weeping, but sends relief.

The omnipotent Christ is not a listless spectator of your trials, He is an elder brother defending you against your foes. His thoughtfulness of you enters into every detail of your life. The very hairs of your head are numbered is the significant illustration of Christ's care of you. You have, no doubt, seen the picture of the doctor sitting beside the sick child, while the father stands aside watching anxiously the expression on the doctor's face, and the mother is sitting by a table with her face in her hands weeping bitterly. Here are three aspects of sympathy and care. The doctor expresses active sympathy, a determination to help; the father, the anxiety of love, and the mother, love inexpressible. Christ's sympathy and care combine the three aspects. His care for you plans and provides. He has an interest in you, a tender regard for you. There is a weight of care that crushes half the human race. Christ

takes this as a mighty Atlas and bears it upon His back.

Christ gives you the assurance of safety and comfort by the promise of His presence. At every difficult turn of life the unseen companion is beside you saying, "Lo, I am with you always." The storm may rage, and in weak faith you may cry, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" and His answer is heard and seen in the stilling of the storm. "Fear not"—that is the inspiring word that gave strength to the martyrs as they went to the stake; the Covenanters heard it in the Scottish glens as they were hunted for devotion to the faith; preachers and reformers have been aroused by it to undertake great things for God. "Fear not"—that is the word for you to-day. Rejoice, contend, conquer. Conquer as Constantine is said to have done by the sign of the Cross in the heavens. In Christ's name go forward and you cannot fail.

God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but He has delight in you. It is His pleasure to give, it is yours to receive. The more you delight in giving, in acts of benevolence, which is God-willing, the more God-like will you become. It is the good pleasure of God to give you all things needful to aid you in

leading a holy life among men. This is seen in the provisions of nature, in the sustaining power, beauty and profusion of the gifts of nature ; it is felt in the blessings of providence and grace. It is the intention of God to exalt you. He has endowed you with faculties, and made you an heir of His wealth of wisdom. See what He has done to the men who have allowed Him to do as He wished with them. He has made them strong, handsome and holy. It is the intention and delight of God to supply the daily wants of His children. The sun is God's great fire to warm His children, and the lamp He has hung in His great palace to light them through the world. In His great garden there are fruits, flowers and grasses for man and beast. Men are only collectors, the Father is the Creator. He makes the stones, and men quarry them for their mansions ; He forms the minerals, and hides them, that in seeking them manhood may be developed. The Father is the provider, and men gather the supplies that lie at their door. Fear not, He is working for you when you are asleep, and He has been storing His supplies for ages. He intends the best for His children in relation to salvation. It is His delight to forgive sin, to supply grace for every trial, to guide into the ways of peace, to impart

wisdom, to polish your character. There is no temptation in which He is not able and willing to supply relief. Hell is kept at bay by his power in defending you. He intends to take you home. Heaven would not be home for God if His children were left outside. He wants you there. Fear not, the lights of the Eternal City are burning that you may not lose your way. God is waiting for you. He waits as a mother for the coming of her loved ones. Blessed prospect! Blessed assurance! The everlasting arms are underneath you. They are not thrown around you, lest you might fall through, but underneath you that you may be upheld. No man can fall below God's underneath. In the darkest night He sees you, in the direst poverty He is in your home, in the deepest trial He is beside you. Be not afraid, God is always at hand. He is not an absentee God. He has His hand on the lever of the engine of the universe. Your life is in His keeping. He will not fail you in all the journey of life. Death cannot defeat Him. Eternal love conquers all. Rejoice, He will open the pearly gates and let you in. All is well when God is here. All will be well when God is there.

THE UNFINISHED LIFE.

MAN is made for progress. Let old age creep upon him, he is still reaching out. Advancement is the order of life. In the mind and soul of a true man there are always growing pains. All real progress lies in the path of righteousness and is toward God. There can be no true spiritual ascent away from God. We descend to meet men, we ascend to meet God. We rise in spiral forms toward Him who is the source and centre of all beauty, strength and love. God hides His masterpieces in our souls, and if only we would let Him have His way with us, we should stand before the world in eloquent beauty surpassing the skill of the great masters of art. Every man is a suggestion of what he should be, but alas, through sin, he is not God's idea of a man. You have within you a capacity for enlargement, talents which grow in strength and adaptation, and aspirations after a fuller life, and these are the marks of your Father's hand, which are a promise of greatness and

power. The Christian ideas of God and personal holiness have made possible the progress of the human race. Paganism exhausted all the germs of progress that lay within it, and all that lies beyond the points reached by paganism are due to Christianity alone. The conscience of the pagan was trained through a sense of what was due from himself as an individual to the nation, but Christianity revealed the fact of an infinite God, with His interest in man, and His demand for personal holiness in men, and in these a new departure was made, and there was given to man an incentive to progress. Our Father is beckoning us to rest in His wisdom and love, and to strive to become like Him. As we listen with yearning hearts, and obey, we grow in strength and beauty.

Men of to-day have a fear of self-knowledge. They want to be great, and are afraid of thinking about God and eternal things, and of placing themselves beside the majestic figure of Christ, for then they are made aware of their own littleness. It is easier and seems more noble to walk among pigmies, and tower above them, than to dwell among large men, and reach out to a greater height. Christ calls us to get away from worldliness, and to stand by His side, not to dwarf us by His greatness, but to assure

us that we may grow like Him. The worldly spirit stunts spiritual growth, while association with Christ is a prophecy of greatness. The Apostle John was instructed to write to the angel of the church in Smyrna: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Do your work well, and you shall attain the fruit of your work. Sow the seeds of a godly life on earth, and you shall reap an abundant harvest of godliness in glory. Live a superior life for Christ in the world, and you shall enjoy the favor of Christ in eternity.

Your life on earth is an unfinished life. When you have finished your course, that is not the end of your existence, and your work is not done. Life is only a day, and to-morrow you begin in eternity to continue your task, which if well done here will be no longer a duty but a delight. Our hearts respond to the thought of Victor Hugo, when he said: "For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose, verse history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song. I have tried them all. But I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave, I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work,' but I cannot say, 'I have finished my life.' My day's work will begin

again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight to open with the dawn." Life is only a Saturday evening. There is another and a better world, and we must not complain if the future life now and again asserts itself and claims its population from all ages. Man thirsts after perfection. The body cries for health, the mind for truth, the imagination for beauty, the soul for holiness, and the whole nature for perfection. The artist seeks the highest in art, and the spiritual man longs for saintliness. You may keep down for a while the passion of the soul for that which is perfect in life and character, but there are sacred moments in your life when you gaze enraptured upon some picture of a saint, or read with tear-dimmed eyes the biography of a man or woman who has become wholly absorbed in a passionate devotion to God. You see in the printed page a picture of what you might be, and what your conscience tells you ought to be enjoyed by you, but you have not attained the beauty because you have covered the face of Christ with a screen of worldliness, and the vision of holiness has been lost. Man has a thirst for the infinite. The appetites of your soul crave for the revealing of the divine face, and the presence of God

with you. Your first thoughts ascended toward God. Your last thoughts have descended toward self. The magnetism of Christ drew you toward Himself in the days of childhood, but the world has worn off the holy influences in your soul, and you respond no longer to the divine touch. The passion of the infinite tosses the human soul against the small things of the world. The soul bounds as a ball between heaven and hell. It rises toward God with a great yearning for purity, and again descends to hold communion with the sinful things of earth.

Life on earth is fragmentary, nothing reaches completion. As we leave our tasks incomplete at the close of the day, to continue them on the morrow, so we cease our earthly labor but continue our holy service in heaven. We sink into the repose of sleep at the close of the evening of life, with a "Good-night" upon our lips, and awaken to the activities of the new and better life in the morning of the eternal day. We never seem to finish any work. The whole life seems to be like the unfinished problems on the boy's slate, waiting for an opportune moment, which never comes, to complete them. Plans are made and never put into execution, duties are undertaken and never fulfilled, and while we are hoping for the leisure

when we shall gather up the fragments and finish the tasks of life, there is a knock at the door, and an angel calls us away. This life has many withheld completions. How much was expected of you by your family and friends from your talents and advantages, but instead of walking with high resolve in the upper regions of virtue and peace, you have followed the lower trails in the valley, and have failed to fulfil the hopes of those who loved you. The wandering boy has often been the mother's darling, trained in a religious home. The drunkard has sometimes been a minister's son. The hod-carrier has been a graduate of a university with high honors. The struggling soul has been hindered by sickness from doing his best, and instead of glory his name has been writ in water. Will there not be an opportunity in the future life for those who have honestly failed on earth, so that the congenial sphere which they never found will there await them, and the glory they lost on earth will be theirs in heaven?

The unattained ideals of some men teach us that life is unfinished. The painter and sculptor never reach their highest ideals when death calls them away from their work, and the saint never attains the highest beauty in

Christ. The Master stands as a living statue on a lofty pedestal, and His followers stand looking up with a great longing to be like Him ; and while they are gazing upon Him with an intense hunger of heart, and their ideals of holiness growing as they see more of His beauty, then, before they have wrought out their purpose, and engraven on their hearts the sacred picture, their eyes grow dim and life bids them farewell. The holy purpose, the Christ ideal, is never fulfilled, for while the songs of hope are being sung, night comes on and the new day of eternity is ushered in. The picture of Christ in the heart is being etched day by day, but there always remain some portions to be retouched, and it is never so complete as to meet the ideal of the saint. The work is unfinished. In the other life the picture will be taken up, and the artist of the soul with a new vision will seek to perfect the incomplete painting of Christ.

The unfulfilled aspirations of some men teach us that our lives are unfinished. Was there ever a good man who passed away from earth perfectly satisfied that his desires after likeness to Christ had been fully realized? Read the lives of the men who had continual fellowship with Christ, and had shown by their

conduct that they had learned many of His secrets, and you will be a witness to their confessions of failure to attain all there was for them in Christ. They never reached the height of their aspirations after holiness. The unfinished state of the work of some men teaches us that our lives are unfinished. They began to build the sacred temple as a fit habitation for the Most High, but it was never completed. The author falls asleep before the last page of his book is written, and there lie hidden in his desk unfinished manuscripts which will be consigned to the flames. The contractor lays the foundations and raises the walls of the mansion, and another is called upon to finish the contract. The missionary translates a portion of the Scriptures into a foreign tongue, and it remains an unfinished monument of his genius, industry and holy zeal when his grave is covered with the dust of years. In another life the talents which had never fully expressed all that was in them, the energies which were young when the curtain fell, the hopes which required years to be realized, will find full scope, and through the eternal ages there will be no barrier to the expansion of mind or soul, and no enemy to step in and put an end to the holy task.

The idea of activity proves the eternal existence of the soul. God made man with springs of energy which detested idleness and found delight in an active life. This pleasure in work continues through life, and craves a sphere and time where the soul may more fully express itself. Idleness is death, activity is life. Our activity is continued in eternity. The thought of endless leisure and enforced idleness is not pleasant to contemplate, but there is joy in the prospect of finding something to do. The prisoner in his solitude will nurse a plant creeping between the flags of the pavement of his prison, or make a companion of a mouse whose friendship brings light into his life. We know not the employments of heaven, but congenial pursuits will be there, something to ensure perpetual delight and eternal progress. The death of the young suggests to us another life to finish their work. The finished shaft in the cemetery, expressing the end of a beautiful life, is not as true as the broken column, calling for an addition to its height in the after years. The graves of all men are as columns passing through the roof of a temple; seen from below, the roof hides the upper parts of the columns, but seen from above, the roof is only a floor hiding the lower parts. Our lives seem to be

broken when we look upon them from earth, but they reach into the courts of heaven. The youth of genius crave an opportunity denied them here, and the latent powers cry out for a place to speak the message for God.

The anomalies of life teach us that our life on earth is not the end. Some men have never had a chance of expressing what was in them. You never seem to understand some people until they are gone, and then you have no opportunity of making the confession that was due them, or of thanking them for their acts of love. The souls of men are surrounded by high and thick walls, and you cannot scale nor penetrate them, and you long for a chance of telling them the story, in the other life, of your indebtedness to their example. In our journey through the world, though we may occupy a very small space, we are always in the way of another man, hindering him from going forward. Your advancement in life is the barrier to the progress of your companion. There seems to be no room for both in crossing the stile, so while he is waiting darkness sets in, and in the morning he has crossed the river by another path, and you will not meet him till you stand face to face with God. The eternal bond of friendship points to a future life. There are ties formed

here between soul and soul that cry out for an eternity where they can renew their friendship. Life is never the same when we have caught a glimpse of a face in the crowded street of a city. You touch the hand of a friend, and your heart is changed by a holy yearning for another warm grasp, but never again will your hands meet till, in the dawn of the eternal day, you greet the smile of your lost friend. The fact of responsibility for your work on earth teaches you that life is unfinished.

Your life on earth is a preparation for the future life. Could you read the history of a single soul, noting its stages of progress, its struggles and secrets, you would find a tragedy deeper than yet revealed upon the printed page. Every blade of grass has its story to tell, and every soul has a history written in blood. Human life is the preparation for the spiritual life. There are degrees of initiation into the spiritual life to which you are introduced by the trials of life. Many of your burdens are but successive deaths by which you enter into the glories of a blessed life on earth. You are now going to school to get ready for the work of eternity. When you die you are returning to school to learn the language of the new country, which supersedes the dialects of earth. You are

now laying foundations for the future life. The hallowed lives of this lower clime, which cheer us on our earthly course, will blossom more fully in the immortal sphere. Who can tell but that the same lines of thought and study will be pursued in the land of eternal progress, and the treasures of wisdom will be enjoyed and give greater richness to the glory and happiness of heaven. Are you building your temple for time or eternity? Your life is only a soap-bubble hanging to the pipe in the hand of a child, which a slight breeze will blow away. Up and down the river the boats have been plying for many years with their living freight ; but as you walk along the banks the songs of long ago have died upon the breeze, the voices are still, the faces have changed, and could the river tell its story, it would be a mournful dirge upon the emptiness of life and the flight of things. Are you building for time? Then look at the crumbling edifice with its walls cracked and the birds building their nests in the ruins. Are you building for eternity? Then behold the spires of your beautiful temple rising beyond the clouds into the presence of God. The only way to have the hope of a blessed immortality is to have something in your soul which you can reasonably wish to be made immortal. Plant

deeply in your heart great thoughts of God and man, treasures of wisdom which you cannot afford to lose and you desire to be preserved. Build wisely, for your work continues, and you shall look upon it again. Build in harmony with the will and plans of the Master of life. Follow His ideal and purpose, that when you see Him face to face you may not be ashamed. Place yourself under the constant instruction of Christ that you may build for God. Begin with Christ, continue with Christ, and end with Christ.

THE ART OF GLADNESS.

ALL men yearn after happiness and are in continual pursuit of it. Every nook and corner of the earth is explored to find it ; the flowers, the birds and the stars are asked to reveal their knowledge of its existence and place of abode, and many weary days and nights are spent in seeking to discover and possess it. You may be one of the weary ones pursuing the phantom which always eludes your grasp. You have failed to secure it because you have dipped your bucket in an alkaline well. You may have sought it in wealth, and you have learned that the rich man's safe may be crammed with jewels and yet he may be a victim of melancholy. You may have sought it in culture, but a man may be a master of many languages, and be proficient in art and science, and shine in society, and yet be unhappy. You may have sought it in the flickering light of vain amusements, and the light has died in the hour of need. You have thought that you would obtain

happiness by getting things, whereas it is secured by giving away things. The desire to be thought socially or financially better than you are is an enemy to all true happiness. A blind pursuit of happiness always ends in a closed alley where the runner strikes his head against a wall. The art of happiness is still in its infancy, but the art of misery is well understood. It is always easy to utter disagreeable things and to be unpleasant. Unhappiness is a disease of the soul which not only affects ourselves but depresses all with whom we come in contact. Happiness is that which happens. It comes by hap. It is a thing which comes by chance. Gladness comes from a root which means "to be bright, to shine." The man who is glad is one who is a light shedding brightness on the world. Excitement is not gladness, though some people give it that name. Holiness makes gladness.

Man was born for gladness. He was made to enjoy the blessings of nature. He is born capable of pleasure. The innocent child laughs in his glee as he scampers along the beach of the lake, or picks flowers in the forest and listens to the singing of the birds. Had man remained in a state of purity, and listened not to the voice of sin, he would not only have found continual delight in all that God has given him,

but he would have rejoiced in the abiding presence of God. It is the purpose of God to make all His children glad. Real gladness is not a plant of mortal birth, capable of culture, but a bit of the glory of heaven, which has dropped upon our earth to assure us that God is love and the final abode of His children is a place of unending bliss. The tint of the lily bears the impress of the finger of God, the light of the firefly is a pledge of divine love written upon the face of night, and the rustling of the living leaves is a divine covenant of peace to His human children. It is a part of the plan of your Father that you should be joyful, and if you are always morose and discontented you have lost your way, for the path of God is a path of peace. Gladness is never far from truth. It is a great privilege to possess a cheerful disposition, for sweetness of temper and gentleness of spirit will glorify God. These qualities of the heart will transform the world, making music in the street, while weary men and women are compelled to listen, and the burdens fall when lifted by a smile, and the heavy task is lightened by a song. It is your service as a child of God to make the world bright with the music of your heart. God has put it in your power to make others glad, and you can only do so by having

your own soul filled with joy and letting it out upon the world. Gladness has its legitimate place in your life. A house without windows would not be a good place to live in for health or comfort, and a life without joy will shorten your days and lessen your influence for good. Sunshine makes the flowers grow, and smiles sweeten life. Lift up your head and sing your songs of love and peace, that men may find their way to God and learn that Christians are the happiest folk in the world. Christianity is a religion of joy. It is not the sigh of an ascetic in the desert doing penance, but the song of a workman at his toil praising God. Paul says: "Rejoice evermore" and "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice." You are not allowed as a child of God to rejoice as others in the day of prosperity only, but you are commanded to be glad when it is impossible for others to sing. The religion of Christ is full of light and song. It is evermore a thing of beauty directing the fountain of youthful ardor into channels of holiness and usefulness, and shedding a mellow light upon the head of the aged saint. It is the æolian harp of life, making music whether the winds of adversity or prosperity blow upon it, sometimes strong and clear as clarion notes, and again soft and gentle as the evening zephyrs.

This earth is a fit place for the children of God to be glad. If anyone has a right to be joyful in the world it is surely the child who sees His father's face and hears His voice in everything. This is God's world for you to live in and use to His glory as He directs you. You are not to use it for your own happiness, but to use it as He has told you, and then you will be glad. It is not for you to go about as butterflies from flower to flower sipping sweetness, but to perform your duty without any thought of gain ; and in steady work for God, as you strive to achieve great things in His name, you will find that gladness which you have not been seeking. There is abundant joy in fellowship with God on earth. If you keep the company of Christ the whole of your life may be a journey to Emmaus. In communion with Christ the clouds which temptation and trials bring will be shadows only, cast by the eternal presence. In the presence of God there is fulness of joy. Christ came to give men gladness and make all the world joyful with His light and presence. He came to change the fountains of earthly pleasure into springs of perennial freshness, which give strength to him who drinks. He came to transform the water of ignoble joys into the wine of purest bliss. Let Christ enter

your mirth and He will change it into a thing of beauty which will be a joy forever. Let Christ enter fully into your heart and life, and reign supremely there, and the dark world will shine as a beautiful spring morning, when the flowers are lifting their heads, and the birds are singing. Christ wants you to partake of the joy which He has brought to earth. "Why should the children of a King go mourning all their days?" Look up and be glad in the assurance that God loves you, and in the promise of divine peace. Christ was deeply concerned about the gladness of His followers, and He is anxious that you should be filled with joy. He said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." He took all the trouble of explaining to His disciples the method of securing gladness, because He was anxious that they should possess it. If a mother is anxious that all her children should be happy, from the toddling child to the young man just stepping forth into the world, much more is Christ deeply concerned for your enjoyment. If you are not glad after all that He has done for you, then the blame must rest upon yourself. Christ died to give you joy. It is a wonderful thing that He should suffer that you might be glad; yet when you think of His intense love it

is not surprising that He should do His utmost to bring to you such joy as the world without Him does not possess and cannot know. Christ brings in His hand the gift of joy for you. He was a man of sorrows, yet He brought gladness in His hands for those who had none of themselves. When He left the glory of His Father on His mission of love, He plucked some fruit from one of the trees in heaven, and brought it to earth, that you and all His followers might take a piece and be forever glad.

The Master was acquainted with grief, yet He had joy in His own heart, and He had abundance to give to all who sought Him. The joy which He gives is not a fleeting emotion that passes away as the dew of the morning, but an everlasting flower which the summer's sun cannot blight or the frosts of winter destroy. It is an abiding gift which Christ maintains by His presence. The tempter may strive to quench the holy joy which burns in your heart, but Christ stands by feeding the flame, and it dies not night nor day in the glory of His presence. It is the desire of Christ that your joy should be full. Fulness of joy is your inheritance in Christ. Gladness in Christ is so great that you are not able to tell all its power. It is unspeakable. The Blackfoot Indian, when unable to

express his surprise or joy, placed his hand upon his mouth and allowed his eyes and attitude to manifest what his lips could not utter, so the joy of Christ is beyond utterance. Let the sunshine of your face speak the joy of Christ in your heart, for human language is too limited to express the depth and fulness of your joy. But it is more than unspeakable, it is full of glory. It is radiant with the beauty and sweetness of Christ. The joy which Christ gives is secure. "Your joy no man taketh from you." Adversity cannot rob you of this treasure, for the saints in their hours of deepest trial have sung their sweetest songs. The rack and the stake have listened to the songs of the martyrs, and the persecutors have been compelled to acknowledge an unseen power, helping the helpless in their hour of distress. Man, devil and sin in a secret conspiracy cannot deprive you of the gladness which lies hidden in your heart. The joy of Christ is eternal. It begins on earth and grows apace, until with everlasting joy upon your head you enter that country where there are pleasures for evermore.

Happiness is pursued by all, and happiness escapes the pursuit of all. Sometime in your life the thing seemed to be at hand, and all you had to do was to reach forth and grasp it, but

when you moved forward it was gone. Who will reveal the secret of this thing which all men seek and none seem to find? It is like seeking gray trout in the lake and finding none, and then sailing day after day in search of them and never gaining the object of your pursuit; but years afterwards there remained the remembrance of the rocky caves, the deep cool waters, the glowing sunset, and the singing of the birds. The secret of gladness is in the keeping of Christ, and you will obtain the joy by not seeking it, but by following Christ. The Saviour never set gladness before Himself as the object of His pursuit, though it is said, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross." He was not inspired by an ambition for posthumous fame. As a mother toils and cares for her children, never thinking of her own interests, but inspired by love, and finds her supreme joy in ministering to them, and the joy that is set before her is the prospect of their future comfort and prosperity, so the joy set before Christ was the prospect of seeing the end of His work in the blessings it procured for the redeemed race, their deliverance from sin, and their future blessedness and eternal salvation. Christ's method of giving joy to others is in union with himself. He said: "These things have I

spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." The things which He spoke of as the means of securing His joy were Christ abiding in us and we abiding in Christ. The secret of a life of gladness is to allow Christ to dwell in you, controlling your will, your passions and purposes, and giving Him the right of way in your life. Gladness is obtained by the prayer of faith. "Ask and receive that your joy may be full." Seek all your gladness in God and obtain it direct from Him. Trust in God and dare all things for Him, and you shall have boundless joy. Consecrate all you have to Christ. Manage your business for Him. Take all your burdens and perplexities to Him, and live your own life for Him, and then as you ply your daily task through the mart and crowded street, you will carry music in your heart, and the strain will repeat itself again and again in your soul. The secret of the highest life consists in committing everything to the will of God. Trust in Christ and keep His company every moment. Plant your foot upon the unseen world if you desire to bless men and glorify God, for no man can move this world unless he stands upon another. There is a joy in temptation. Without trials and temptations you will never grow

into the maturity of spiritual manhood. Without temptation you will never know how small and mean you are, and how great and good God is. So the apostle says: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into divers temptations." Christ is the source of all real gladness. He is the foundation of all joy, temporal and eternal. If you are unhappy, the cause of your misery lies in yourself. Without Christ you cannot find gladness. It would be easier for you to cross the ocean without a ship than to secure gladness without Christ. Christian gladness is converted sadness. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Take your sorrow to Christ, and He will transform it into joy by His own process of alchemy. It seems easy to march through the world in the morning, with the line of the procession unbroken, and the bands playing, but it is hard to march in silence at night when the music has ceased. March on, my friend, and do your work in the gay and also in the sorrowful time. Let Christ into your sorrow, and the light of His heart will change it into a thing of beauty, and your sighs will become songs to cheer the weary hearts of men. Christ not only changes sorrow into joy, but He also transforms joy into better and greater joy. He changes the fleeting pleasures of the world

into strong and permanent gladness. He will transform your mirth, if you will allow Him, into an enduring joy. As the tide comes in it chafes and frets, rushing into the bay, lapping the shore and swirling round ; but when the tide is full the bay is at rest, and only gentle ripples rise and fall on the surface ; so when the soul is troubled by sorrow, the power and presence of God comes in surging and eddying, but when these fill the soul there is perfect peace and joy. The spirit of God brings gladness into the hearts as one of the graces which He bestows. In the service of God there is gladness. Religious duties are sweet when they are accepted and performed in the spirit of Christ. Be not afraid of possessing joy, fearing that some day your cup of gladness may be empty. Make a large and deep acquaintance with Christ, and you need never fear the loss of His love and power. Begin to be glad as soon as you can, and make the most of the little joy you possess. Be as joyous as it is possible for you to be, and give no place to sadness in your life, for Christ has taught the art of gladness through full surrender to Him.