

GUIDES

TO THE

HIGHER LIFE

J. WALTER SYLVESTER

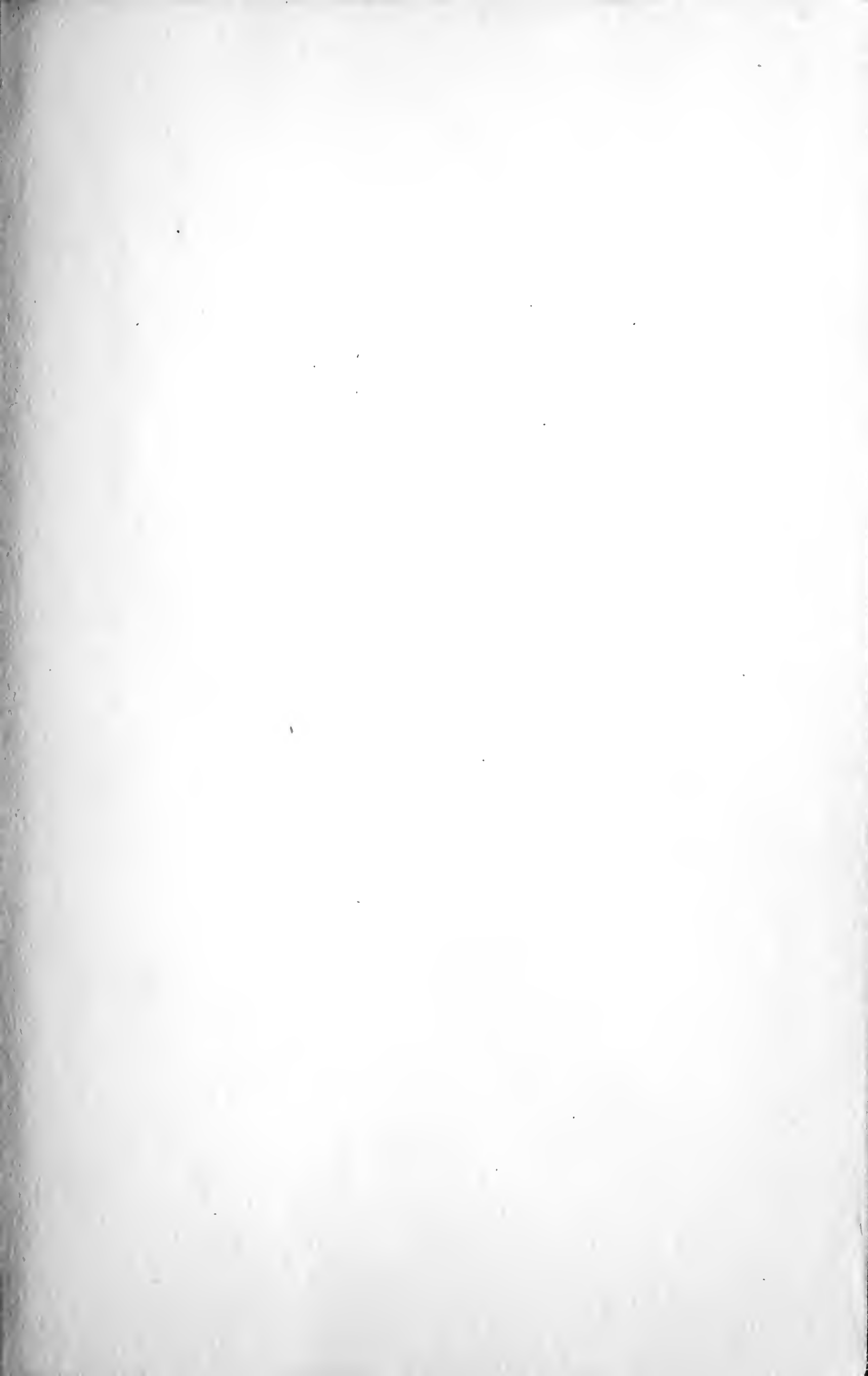


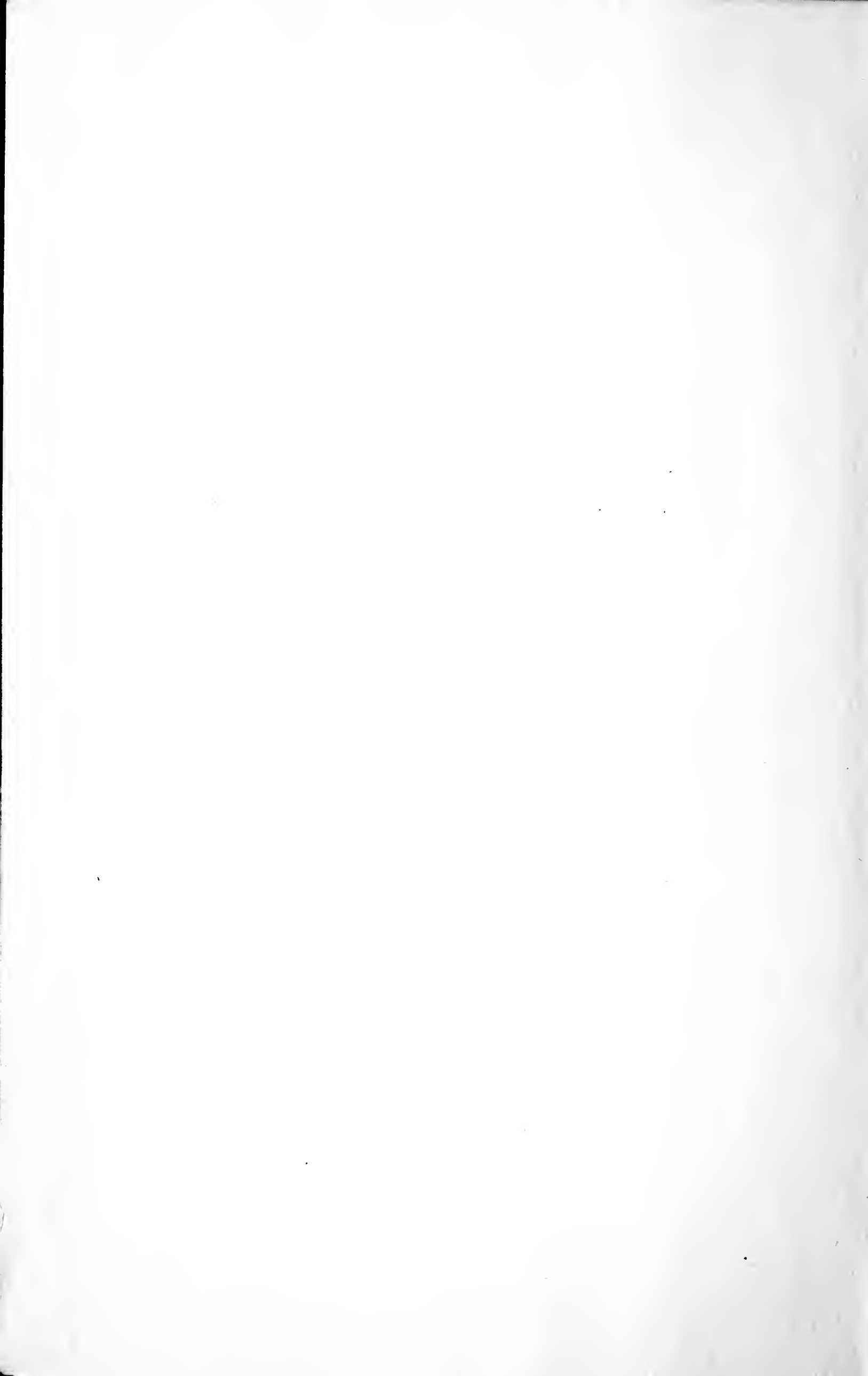
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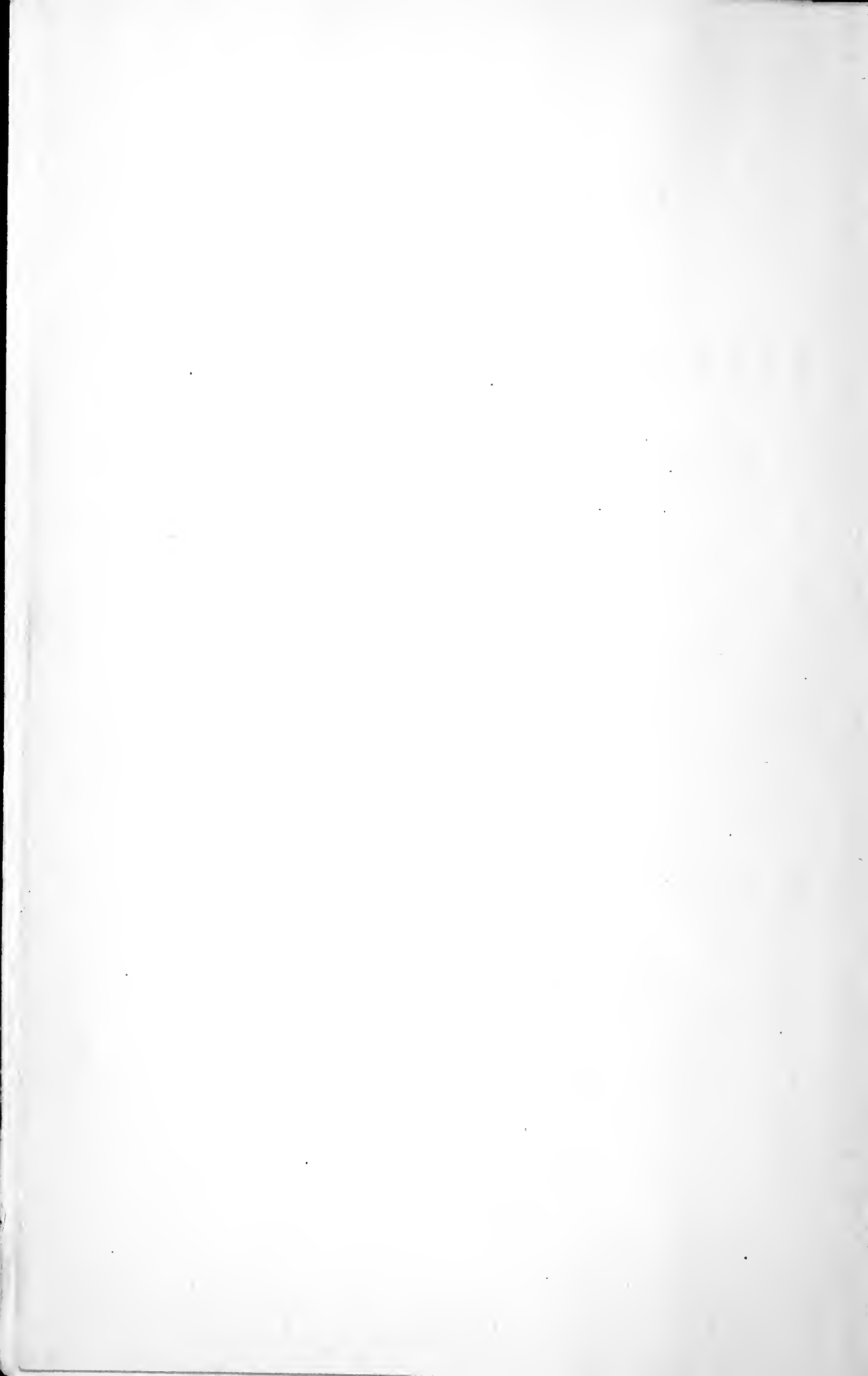












GUIDES

TO THE

HIGHER LIFE

SELECTIONS FROM THE SERMONS
AND OTHER WRITINGS

OF

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SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

ANNIE T. KEYSER

*No man ever follows the guiding star of his life
without its leading him in adoration
to the feet of the Holy One.*

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J. WALTER SYLVESTER

W. W. RAYMOND

W. W. RAYMOND

PREFACE

The quotations contained in this little volume have been gathered mainly from sermons and prayers. A few poems that seemed to have special application have been added, and several selections have been taken from addresses delivered by the author from time to time.

A. T. K.

INTRODUCTION

Would you have me tell you how you may be sure that there is a God and that life is a divine gift? Would you have me tell you how you may enter into the consciousness of his love? Then observe that I am setting you to no high and mighty endeavor, that I am not talking about things mysterious and other worldly. Go out today determined to grapple in a new spirit with all the ordinary experiences in life, and see if they will not react upon your faith, quicken within you a new sense of the divine life; dwell upon those facts and experiences that are designed to kindle pity; consider how men are to be forgiven, since they are so weak of will; nourish all the deep desires that come to you, but do not drop from your hand the homely duty; take nothing of your soul's trouble and doubt and bitterness to other men — they have enough in their own lives; act toward them as though they were your brothers; live in those natural feelings that are the common inheritance of the race; do not seek for the unusual experiences, but emphasize the everyday loves and hopes and joys; remember that this is a hard world, in which thousands and tens of thousands are daily overthrown, a world torn and bleeding and needing your healing touch; think upon the

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unseen battles that are being waged, the lives that are tossed by storms, the people who are desperately fighting for a bare chance to live; think of all who are crying to God for help, all who are hungry and thirsty for companionship; speak some word that may help a brother to forget his sin, to overcome his sorrow, to ease his pain; tell him some story of joy and comfort and blessed hope; have less and less to do with the controversies and arguments that divide men, and more and more with the fraternal interests that unite them; help men to understand what gentleness and love mean; lead them by your companionship into that deep quiet that comes only to those who have found sympathy; dwell upon those things that are simple, the things of the child spirit, easy to be understood; do not permit yourself to divide men into classes as you think of them — all are brothers in God's sight, needing forgiveness, rich and poor, learned and unlearned — all, all are children of the one Father; cease thinking and talking so much about business and fashion, about the things of the senses; make one earnest effort to realize something of God's presence as it is striving to make itself known to you in all the simple joys and delights and duties of daily life. Live thus with all your power for one year, and see if the thought and the presence of God will not become real to you.

J. W. S.

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January 1 The present is rooted in the past, but it has its fruitage in the future. The rosebud should not strive to remain a bud; nor should it become impatient and complain because it must wait till tomorrow to become a rose. It never will fulfil itself by remaining a bud; nor will it fulfil itself by separating itself from the bush. In the vegetation of the garden and in the vegetation of the soul there is this same divine law of necessity. That which is today comes out of the past, but it has no divine meaning unless it is the prophecy of something better in the future.

January 2 The material out of which you are to build your character is here at your very hand.

The possibility of all that you can ever be lies within your life today.

January 3 Cherish your life as you would cherish some crown jewel of priceless value. Throw away the trappings of life, the rubbish that gathers about life, throw all this away. But your life itself, the secret sacredness of your soul's being — this must be kept from the stain of impure thoughts and guarded from the wild, deep-passioned assaults of unworthy motives.

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January 4 Discouragement has no place in the Christian economy of motives. Go on doing God's will. Go on building up your life on its Christ side. Exercise the patience that is yours, and from strength will come greater strength. You have not realized your dreams? Never mind, are you realizing God's dreams? Be thankful for even the unrealized dreams.

January 5 The highest priesthood is the priesthood of service. The true priest of the most high God is the man who ministers to those in need. He may be an appointed minister or a layman; he may stand in the pulpit of a church or at the bench of a carpenter; he may labor in the sanctuary or in the shop — it matters not in the sight of God. There are just as true priests today in our houses of business as in our houses of worship. Any man living may be a priest if he will, not a priest after the ecclesiastical ideal but a priest after the ideal of Jesus.

January 6 Men tell us that Christianity is only a good life, thus reducing to a mere ethnic force the thing that has changed and transformed this world. Christianity is more than a good deed; it is the inspiration out of which the deed gathers itself, as the wave out of the ocean; it is the song of an angel; it is the radiance of a star; it is the mystery and passion of a divine love.

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January 7 Happiness is possible to any man, however environed he may be by trouble. There have been those who, out of the heart of the world's misery, have gathered the golden treasure of an almost divine happiness. Thousands, broken and breathless, have battled their way through life's raging tempest to find at its center the holy calm of God's peace.

January 8 May we have the single eye that shall see Thy guiding hand and the ear that shall hear and apprehend the whispers of Thy will.

Passing strange it seems that any soul should be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

January 9 Strive with all your power to right the wrongs of life, to do away with the inequalities of life. Let your murmuring be loud and insistent wherever and whenever there is a question of justice to those who are being wronged. But see to it that your murmuring does not spring out of envy of other people's good fortune. The moment you begin to covet that which you have not earned, that which is not yours, that which you have no right to touch — that moment joy goes out of your life, that moment your soul begins to shrivel in the sight of God.

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January 10 May this whole day be given to the Father in all the ardor of perfect trust, and finding him in worship and in prayer may we find peace.

January 11 The secret of contentment is to have in one's soul the sense of God's overruling. To believe that there is a divine power overshadowing us, that if only we trust ourselves to God's guidance he will care for us — it is this that causes strong content to flow into a man's soul as molten iron into a mold. So long as you believe that there is nothing in life except what your hands can grasp, just so long will your soul be filled with greed and your heart burn with covetous desire. But rise by the power of faith in Christ and in all Christ accomplished, into the sweet realization of those words, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee," and at once the restless passions of worldly greed and envy are stilled, and over your life and through it creeps the calm of an infinite content.

January 12 Progress in character is by means of influence. We become like those with whom we live and associate. Turn from wrong ways, wrong thoughts, wrong associations, wrong actions; turn to God in the teachable spirit of a child; dwell with him and you will become like him.

Guides to the Higher Life

January 13 There are certain things that a man should fear. He should fear lest he prove himself a traitor to the high cause, he should fear all those subtle shapes of sin that rob one of his manly powers, above all he should fear the degeneration of his spiritual faculties. But there should be no fear of God and of his part in the great work; all distrust should center in ourselves.

January 14 God tests us in the light of our ideals. There is only one ideal of imperishable worth in this great world of God's, and that is the ideal of righteousness.

Let us know that strange thrill of the soul that vibrates only when the sweet note of righteousness is touched.

January 15 It is not in what we are doing that we make our great mistake, it is in what we are failing to do; it is not that we are winning the bread of life but that we are so largely failing to win the life itself; it is not that we are sowing to the flesh and reaping money or fame or comfort, but that we are too nearly failing to hold these things in such a way that out of them shall come the spiritual harvest of a divine life.

Guides to the Higher Life

January 16 God's kingdom, with all its unseen spiritual ministries, is all about us.

Was there ever an emergency in which some angel hand did not help you?

January 17 You make a mistake when you try to live upon the beliefs of your childhood; you make quite as much of a mistake when you fling those beliefs away. Search behind them till you find out the essential realities that those out-grown beliefs symbolized. Do not long for the simple faith of your past, nor strive to live forever in the faith of your present, but standing firm on the past, out of the wealth of the material of this present day build the larger and nobler faith of the future.

January 18 So long as you live under the presumption that life is given for enjoyment alone, so long you will meet disappointment. But once grant that we are here to learn spiritual lessons, and you will see how everything falls into place. Even our sorrows teach us — yea, far more than our joys.

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January 19 He who breaks the law of nature and of God must expect to see the closed gate and the flaming sword.

May the marvel of Thy divine forgiveness be greater than our guilt.

January 20 There is much of heroism in the world unseen by any eye save that of God. The faults of people lie so plain before our eyes, it is so difficult a thing to put ourselves in their places, that all unconsciously we form the habit of criticizing them. If we accustom ourselves to expect the heroic in our friends and in people generally, though we may often be deceived, there will be many times when we shall be proved to be no false prophet.

January 21 We are not to abandon the building and the launching of the dreamships that we call our hopes, simply for the reason that they are likely to be broken on the rocks. Does not a man grow by defeat quite as much as by success? It matters not, in the far reckoning of things, whether a man's ships be broken or come at last to some desired haven. As God lives, the only thing of importance is whether, in the breaking of his ships, the man himself is broken.

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January 22 Life consists in the fulfilling of its relations. We are born into certain relations. As we grow older and as our lives develop, these relations are multiplied. Those of the child are few and simple, but the child who develops truly and normally fulfils them, such as they are. All along the swift course of life, from infancy to old age, the power and success of a life are measured by the fulfilment of its relations.

January 23 Help us to realize that until we yield our wills to Thine there is nothing high in us and nothing holy, and that we but weary ourselves chasing the shadows of self-desire.

January 24 Public opinion should control neither the pew nor the pulpit. The pulpit especially should shape the course of its thought by the fixed stars. It has nothing to do with the voice of public sentiment; it should listen for the still small voice of the ages. What is the mind of God? How does he reveal himself and where may such revelation be found? If God has spoken, what is his message? These are the questions for the pulpit. And the minister once having received the message of the gospel, needs, even more than other men, to take heed lest he drift away from the things that he has heard.

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January 25 Faith is a flower, as delicate as it is fragrant; it must be nourished with the utmost care.

Help us to live by all the sacred intuitions of trust as well as by sight.

January 26 There are four circles of opinion: first, the opinion a man forms of himself; second, the opinion his friends form of him; third, the opinion of the world concerning him; fourth, God's opinion of him (the reality of his inner life). The honest man is the man who brings all these opinions into harmony and consistency.

January 27 We are living in either the objective or the subjective. A man lives the objective life when he gives himself up to the things that he may touch and see, the material things. In this kind of life there is ever a yearning, a hungering, a half-formed vision. If old age comes on, if the vision is blurred, the soul hunger is unsatisfied. The objective life is known to be slipping away, then comes the longing for the subjective life — the life within, made up of faith and hope and love.

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January 28 The secret of progress is in striking contrasts. We must see something beyond and above us before we can undertake to strive for it. The gift of vision is the condition of advancement. The business man must have the secret of the larger success before he can lay his plans of achievement. Columbus had the vision of a new land before he sailed in his ships. The sculptor has a vision of the ideal of beauty before he puts the chisel to the rough marble. The poet hears the songs of the Muses before he puts his pen to the paper. Well did the old sage exclaim, "Where there is no vision the people perish." Where there is no vision of character there will be no great achievement.

January 29 Unexpected joys will suddenly come to us; may we use them temperately and with gratitude. Hidden sorrows will stand revealed to us; may we gaze at them steadily, with neither doubt nor fear.

January 30 Beauty inspires us with enthusiasm by luring us on and on to something that has in it the potency of perfection. We soon lose interest in all work that can not be made beautiful, and it turns into drudgery on our hands. This woman makes a drudgery of keeping her house; this other holds before her the idea of beautifying her home, and every task under her touch becomes a work of art.

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January 31 Let us not be as children who stand at the sea's edge, sending off their toy boats and weeping when the tiny playthings are wrecked by the waves. Let us guard against shipwreck when we may; but when it comes as a providence that we fail to understand, let us not cry out as though a strange thing had happened, or despair, or yield to any bitterness, but let us walk straight on as those who trust God and are not afraid. There will come the expected loneliness, there will come the expected weariness, there will come the expected failure; but at the last will come the morning, and a voice whispering to us, "It is the Lord."

February 1 May we go into all our darkest pilgrimages, anxious not to change Thy perfect will but only to do and to bear it worthily.

Give us the eternal patience that waiteth in faith and is strong.

February 2 Men have often succeeded in evading the penalties attached to the transgression of the civil law. They have tried to deceive themselves into believing that they could evade the penalties attached to the transgression of the moral law. Be not deceived; God is not mocked. For in the realm of the moral order of things, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

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February 3 The world of which you complain so bitterly is not God's world; it is a world of your own diseased mind's forming, enswathed by the atmosphere of your own bitter spirit. In spite of your complaints God's world is full of beauty and goodness; but that world is veiled by your own imaginings. All this dulness and dreariness is not in the world but in yourself. Create anew your own mind and the world will become new.

February 4 We are restless, dissatisfied, oftentimes unhappy, and we vainly imagine it is money or influence or popularity that would content us. It is something deeper than all that which we need, it is God. Sowing to the flesh will give us a harvest that may satisfy a certain part of our nature. It can never satisfy that spirit part of us that finds its life in loving fellowship with men and in holy communion with God.

February 5 Uninspiring is the task of directing oneself by precepts. The sailor who is set to steer the ship by compass gets the range of some star, then turns from the compass and steers with his face to the heavens above. Men have always made wretched work of steering by the compass of the moral law; they need the inspiration of some star, the guiding light of some personal saviourhood.

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February 6 There are people who think it a kind of wickedness to yield themselves to the emotions stirred by a contemplation of the beautiful; they deem it a sin to give expansion to those instincts for beauty and cravings for pleasure, which God himself breathed into the soul, and which are as much a part of man's religious life as is the instinct of prayer itself. Never has the attempt been made to separate beauty and religion, with any other result than the depriving art of religious inspiration and the depriving religion of that adornment of beauty without which it never lays hold of people of intelligence and refinement.

February 7 You must serve either Christ, the highest man in you, or self, the lowest man in you.

Send Thy gospel, as a sweet-singing angel, to charm us into Thy great and glorious service.

February 8 We need the world to develop our nature and to perfect us, and there may be times when we need to deny or reject the world for this same great end. To take a material view of life is wise and right, but to take a purely material view is degrading and must result in the destruction of our highest powers.

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February 9 If you desire a plant to grow and attain to beauty, you take it out into the sunshine and let the rains wash it and the winds blow upon it. If you wish a soul to grow and attain to strength and beauty, you take it forth into the world of hopes and defeats and teach it to look to God that his love may shine upon it. Then battling storms only make it strong and floods only cleanse it from impurities.

February 10 When you have successfully run the gamut of the ten commandments, you have only arrived at the point where your Christian life is to begin.

May we be blameless and beautiful in character, every faculty performing its appointed task; may our lives be as harmonious as the stars in their courses and full of usefulness to our fellow-men.

February 11 We must worship the divinest thing we know. That divinest thing is love. We know love only as it unfolds itself toward perfection within. This is God creating us in his own image. This is the uncovering of the Christ, and that Christ in us becomes the hope of our perfected glory. Not the human man but the hidden man is the pledge of our divinity.

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February 12 One of the greatest needs of the world is the need of men who will reveal the possibilities of humanity.

Only the sacrifice of self in the interest of some cause that stands for God's will to a man — only this is heroic.

February 13 We live in a spiritual world of which we have too little realization. The very atmosphere of life is full of unseen forces. The very power that we need — none other than the life of God — is pressing in upon us from every side, and like the fishes that cried out to know where flowed the sea, or like the birds that went flying everywhere, inquiring where they might find the air, we do not know how to avail ourselves of this unseen power. So much of the weariness of life would be prevented, counteracted, overcome, if only we could learn how to wait on the Lord, how to keep heart and mind open to the inflowing currents of refreshing power, even while the hand is performing its appointed task.

February 14 Help us to live day by day, unfolding our natures, growing wiser and better, as we change time into life and daily work into beautified character.

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February 15 There is something radically wrong with a personal affection for a loved one, unless it leads the soul toward the final ideal of universal sympathy with all God's creation.

February 16 To be a Christian does not mean that one is to camp down on the explored plain of ethical certainty; it means that one is pledged to spiritual adventure; that he is to fight his way into the dark continents of the world's sin and misery; that he is to breast the gales that sweep the greater deeps of human passion; that, like the knights of olden time, he is to decline no contest from which he may win honor for his Lord and deliverance for his brother.

February 17 Self-denial should not be for its own sake but for the sake of others. He who would save his life must lose it; that is, he who would perfect himself must accomplish his high end through striving to perfect others. Self-denying deeds never strengthen character unless they are done for others under the impulse of love.

Help us to know that by spending some things we win them; when we spend love, pity and truth, increase comes with the spending.

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February 18 Every hour of eternity is full of Thee. There is no desert place in life or death where Thou art not.

Because we can dream of nothing higher we call Thee love.

February 19 Match one human life, I care not how strong it may be, match it alone against the evil, the temptation, the storm of life, and it must needs be torn up and swept away. A single tree on the bare mountain side is stripped and broken by the gale; but stand it with a thousand of its fellows, and it rocks so gently that the birds nestling in its branches are undisturbed. If you think that you are going out single-handed and alone to meet the shock of life's battles and withstand it, meet it and still keep your purity and maintain your honor, and live the Christ life within your soul, you are as destined to defeat as though its cruel clutch were already stilling the throbbing of your heart.

February 20 A thing should not be true because somewhere men have written it down as true, but true because of a divine impulse urging us to a conviction of its truth. If we can not trust our moral perceptions we can trust nothing on earth or in heaven.

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February 21 The life of every man is passed on the shore of some Galilee. All are fishers in whose hands God has placed certain nets of circumstance. Some, like Peter and Andrew, are casting into the sea; others, like James and John, are mending their nets where the sharp rocks have torn them; while still others lie idle on the sand, their nets unnoticed at their feet. To all men, the toilers and the idlers alike, comes the call of the Christ.

February 22 He is the greatest man who best serves the world — not of necessity, in doing so-called great things, but in doing little things in a great way. The lordship over all things comes only to him who stoops to minister. He to whom the world gives much is not truly great; only he who gives to the world has found the highway to true manliness.

Not all of us can rule, but no man is debarred by circumstances from entering into the joy of those who serve.

February 23 O that every one might appreciate in some small way the strength and efficiency that flow into the life of the man who finds his work and devotes himself to it with singleness of purpose! With him all the course of nature and all the universe of God are fighting.

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February 24 However lost we may be in the great woods, if only we can see the sun we are sure of guidance. It is always true to the real direction of things. And however we may have strayed from the true way of life, if only we look upon the life of Jesus we are sure of divine guidance, because he was true to the real end of human life, to do God's will in the world.

Through the clouds that overhang our life there shines enough of truth and certainty to enable us to see our duty and to see it clearly.

February 25 The deepest need of any individual life is the need of companionship. The richness of every life is in exact measure to the swelling currents of companionship that flow through it. What would be all the possessions of this vast creation without companionship? Our occasional seasons of solitude are rich because they enable us to acquire new value for our friends.

February 26 To be a man of much faith means to be a man possessed of a deep and searching vision of divine realities. Faith is the substance of a man's piety, belief the scientific explanation of it. Faith is not a dogma of the intellect; it is a window of the soul.

Guides to the Higher Life

February 27 Why wear away your soul? Possess yourself in patience. Is there not time enough? Do you think to correct in a single day a civilization that has been in process of evolving for a thousand ages? Cease being impatient. Look at things in their large totality. Be mindful of the lessons of creation. Be patient! Be patient!

When our longing outruns Thy purpose teach us to wait in calm tranquillity.

February 28 Love is of greater importance than knowledge. The man whose knowledge is ever so profound but whose sympathies have not been cultivated, is only half educated, for education is the calling out of the whole nature of man. There can be no complete knowledge without love. You may know the facts of physical science, but without a responsive heart to the world of men and women all the humanities will be sealed to you.

February 29 The soul is as sensitive to beauty as the flower is sensitive to atmosphere and sunshine; like the flower it easily withers and loses its fragrance. Let us then wrap the soul in beauty to preserve its delicacy; lift up our ideals even though the world and our own passions strive to drag them down from among the stars.

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March 1 Success, happiness, peace, come only through obedience, whole-souled and thorough, to the Christ sort of life that stoops to serve.

March 2 He who strives to live in the lower nature, indifferent to the cultivation of his higher powers, is making a mistake, together with him who strives to live exclusively in the higher nature, attempting to crush out of his life those appetites and passions that link him to the material world. The lives of the sensualist and ascetic are alike most pitiable. Christ teaches temperance, not abstinence; regulation of our desires and appetites, not their extinction. The lower powers of our nature demand perfecting quite as much as the higher powers. We need to learn how to pray; we need also to learn how to eat and drink, how to breathe and sleep, how to work and play — in short, we need to know how to use this material world without abusing it. We are to regard our nature as a whole. Every man needs some sense of proportion if he would be saved from the well-nigh universal habit of over-developing one side of his nature at the expense of another side.

March 3 We are kin to God. He leads us even when we do not feel the presence of his hand. Never permit yourself to doubt it. The Great Companion is not dead.

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March 4 No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is available for the highest life. He is not the sort of material that God can use in building up the kingdom of heaven. A man never lays hold of the highest life possible to any power of his being till he devotes himself to it with singleness of purpose.

March 5 We are beginning to comprehend that there are many ways of approach to God. The astronomer may worship through the investigations pursued during some silent hour of the night quite as much as the kneeling worshiper at the altar. The workman who digs by the road is spading God's earth and is a coworker with God quite as much as he who preaches from the pulpit. There is no occupation so mean and bare but that religious feeling may play around it, as the burnished clouds shape and reshape themselves around some sacred and ugly peak.

March 6 This day alone belongs to us. Shut us into its sacredness and give us the vision to see whatever it has of divine meaning.

Help us to listen to Thy gospel with the hearing of the soul that no note of its tender music may be lost.

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March 7 The moment a man heroically faces the great moral and religious problems of life, with a determination to solve them for himself, he will find that all the physical forces of the universe are fighting with him. In the same way that the flowers grow in their blind yearning toward the sun, so the spiritual life of man unfolds in its yearnings toward the infinite.

March 8 Every day is a link in the cycle chain of life from God around to God again. As the chain is dependent for its strength on any one of its links and as every chain is as strong only as its weakest link, so every life is as strong only as its weakest day.

Every man wins or loses the battle of his life at his weak point.

March 9 Creeds are valuable; only shallow men ever assert the contrary. But they should never become idols, for then they curb the spirit of investigation. The mind must have free action in every individual, else the religious bondage becomes a curse. To walk in the old ways of religious thought may be good, but there should be no law forbidding men to walk apart and to look for new manifestations of the truth of Christ.

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March 10 It is a fine thing to have the courage of your convictions, but why must one be forever proclaiming those convictions from the house tops? There are so many people who say and do the right things in the wrong places, and they are quite as much a nuisance as the people who say and do the wrong things in the right places. Noise is not a self-evident testimony of moral courage. We should never hesitate to show our colors, but we do not need to flaunt them constantly. The flag that is displayed every day in the year loses its significance on special occasions.

March 11 After we have analyzed all the philosophies of life there remain only these two ways, one of which every man is forced to choose, the life that is lived for one's own gratification and the life that is lived for the good of other people.

March 12 So long as we feel that religion is some mystic and incalculable force outside the domain of law, so long we shall not set ourselves very seriously to becoming religious. But when we recognize that religion is just the culture of soul and as subject to laws as the development of the mind, then we shall set ourselves intelligently to the task of becoming religious in the true sense.

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March 13 Look out through the soul's window of faith and see God. The stars will shine into your eyes if only you lift your face to the sky, and God will be seen if only you watch for him through faith's window.

March 14 There is a field of the flesh and a field of the spirit, and you may sow as you choose. There is no power in earth or in heaven that can compel you, but there is a power that will reckon with you, the divine law of your own being; and behind that law stands God himself.

God's salvation will do all that is possible with every power and capacity of man's being that is left after transgression, but even God himself can not make the man what he would have been had he not committed that sin.

March 15 Gentleness, or kindness, as the better rendering would be, is a virtue full of humility and radiant with beauty, a virtue of insight and tact. Have you not seen people long-suffering but without tenderness? These have learned only part of the lesson of Christ. To bear the burdens and evils of life with patience — this is heroic; to bear them with a patience that is kind — this is divine.

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March 16 People may hold any profession they please, but so long as they fritter away their energies, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" they are practical materialists. It would be better that a man should disbelieve in God and estimate human life in terms of thought and feeling and conscience, than that he should believe in God and estimate human life in terms of food and clothing and stocks and bonds. The materialism that we have to fear today is not that of the scientist's laboratory but that of the street and the shop and the home and the church.

March 17 Every great hero of faith has been one who stood out against the tides of public opinion.

He who puts the cause above himself is the true hero.

March 18 God has placed within the soul prophecies, infinitely glorious, as to what that soul shall be. The mustard tree is wrapped up in the tiny seed. The man as he shall be, crowned with the diadem of his divine manhood, is enfolded within the man as he is.

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March 19 God's image is in every man, obscured by neglect, defaced by sin, overlaid by the coverings of time and circumstance. It is your work and mine to bring out that image, both in our own lives and in those of others.

The measure of a man is not in what he is but in what he may become.

March 20 It is easier to bear the experience of pain when we know that there was One who suffered unto death and never murmured. We find the world hard and are tempted to bitterness of spirit and despair, but it is easier to overcome the temptation when we know that he met the same cruelty and kept his soul sweet and strong.

March 21 What does the world need more than forgiveness of sins? What is there of which the world stands in greater need? Are you free from uneasiness? Have you no consciousness of having done wrong, not so much perhaps by any flagrant act as by the whole temper and disposition of your spirit? Have you been free from injustice, intemperance, envy, hatred, cruelty? Because you do not speak openly to every man and woman you meet is no evidence that your soul is at peace.

Guides to the Higher Life

March 22 The Son of Man comes to your life and to mine, bearing in his pierced hands the gift of peace. "Live for God," he would say, "and do his will; so shall you enter into peace." We are not to withdraw from the world; we are to remain in the world. We are to give ourselves to our work which is to us a blessing only on condition that it teaches us how to find peace. Our hands are for the toils of life but our hearts are for God.

March 23 Sorrow may be a power in your life to sanctify, or it may leave you harder, more selfish and self-centered. There are flowers that shut themselves up under the full streaming of the sun; and there are men and women whom sorrow seems to close to all the radiant influences from without. It was not thus God designed it. Sorrow should unseal the secret sources of one's being, minister holy thoughts to the mind and sacred impulses of love and loyalty to the heart.

March 24 It would be impossible for one to cultivate the virtue of pity without having passed through the experiences of misfortune. Only those who have suffered are capable of appreciating the sufferings of others. We can understand in this world only so much as we have lived.

Guides to the Higher Life

March 25 Stand up under your burden as one who looks life squarely in the face and is not afraid.

It is the struggle of life that gives it strength and lends it interest.

March 26 Christ's passion and death bring us up into the large certainty of God as our Father; but they do more than that, they show us this Father as one who pities and forgives us.

March 27 If one doubts that perfection is achieved through suffering let him turn to a study of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Can you not see how every one of his experiences of suffering ministered to the strengthening and perfecting of his character? Without poverty would he have known the needs and sufferings of the poor? Without frailness of constitution would he have been able to enter into a realization of the meaning of pain to those who were afflicted? Because he was homeless he understood and pitied the outcast; his isolation threw him back upon himself and developed within him the virtue of self-reliance; out of temptation he came to the mastery of all his powers; and in the varied experiences of the passion week he rose at last to the final perfection possible in this life.

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March 28 Jesus is the world's greatest hero, so great that unless a man is morally and spiritually heroic himself, he is incapable of appreciating the heroism of Jesus. To stand before that sublime figure and see nothing transcendently heroic in it, is to stand under the shame of our own moral and ethical unheroism.

March 29 No man ever triumphantly met a moral issue in the arena of life without having previously met and solved that issue in the silence of solitude. The only way to meet a crisis is to go out with armor girded and close, and not wait in unpreparedness till the crisis comes to you.

The first star of evening looked upon a day's accomplishment because the last rays of the morning star fell on a face uplifted in prayer.

March 30 There is no other law for any human soul than that of loyalty to the world of men and women with whom one has to do. A false man is a disloyal man; a true man is he who never betrays a friend. We talk of sin as though it were something in the abstract. There never was a sin committed since time began that did not involve the betrayal of some soul. You never did a wrong thing in your life without selling somebody who trusted you.

Guides to the Higher Life

March 31 He who goes up to his Calvary without first passing through his Gethsemane will go as goes the coward, faithless and faint-hearted. Jesus was truly the Son of Man in the storm and stress of the world because he was the Son of God in the holy experience of some solitary place.

April 1 No man can listen to Christ's words and not feel the conviction growing upon him that this man knew God, that he was as conscious of God as he was conscious of light. This sweetness of God's love filled his life, gave him power, lifted him above all temptations and supported him in the hours of severe trial, sending him at last to his death with these words on his lips, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

April 2 Jesus never promised that God would save men from the evil effects of sin. If we have done wrong we must bear the pain of it and the punishment of it. But God will forgive sins; more, he has forgiven them, and the cross is to us the pledge of that forgiveness. Many people confound forgiveness with removal of penalty; but they are quite different. Forgiveness is oneness of soul and character. To know that God has accepted us, that we are his children — this is to have peace and to enter into forgiveness.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 3 EASTER ANTHEM

Vague shapes of fear that rise upon my
 thought,
 And bring your secret dread
 For all my loved ones dead,
Go back into the night from whence
 unsought,
Ye came but to destroy all love has taught ;
 Go back into the night,
 O do not put to flight
The joys and hopes which cling unto my
 thought.

And ye bright angels seen in all my dreams,
 Attend me while I weep,
 Speak soft of those who sleep,
Speak to me of those high and holy themes ;
Of Him who clothed in heaven's radiant
 beams,
 Ascended from the grave,
 Bound death to be His slave —
Speak to me of the Christ seen in my dreams.

Now does my heart rejoice, my lips sing
 praise,
 For love can never die,
 Christ dwells in light on high,
My songs of triumph unto him I raise ;
He fills my nights with dreams, with love
 my days.
 O risen life divine,
 The life of heaven mine,
Ring out, ye Easter bells! ring joyous praise !

Guides to the Higher Life

April 4 UNAFRAID

I stand amid the thronging fears
 Unmoved by any shape of dread;
Through all the conflict of the years
 I know the way that I am led;
Dauntless I walk as one who hears
 That Christ has risen from the dead.

I climb, with weary feet and slow,
 The toilsome path on which He bled;
Unmarked my footsteps as I go,
 Darkness and storm around my head;
The heights are bathed in light, I know,
 For Christ has risen from the dead.

I will not cry against my fate,
 Nor doubt that I shall reach the goal;
Fearless I stand, content to wait,
 Assured the clouds must backward roll,
The smiting of the storm abate,
 And Christ arise within my soul.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 5 A sense of immortality intensifies one's realization of life. To know that you can not die is to know that life is grandly worth the living. To know that you can not die makes it of some real use to fight against temptation. He who believes that life is of a few years and that at last man is buried as the brute has little incentive to struggle against sin. But put into a man's mind the immortal thought, and you lift him out of the life of the animal into the life of conscious sonship with God.

April 6 Make us strong to do and bear Thy holy will. And when the storm cometh hide us in the cleft of Thy rocks, and lead us again under Thy peaceful heavens, unharmed and unafraid.

April 7 Every one of us has in addition to his five senses, a sixth sense which we call faith. It is the vision of the soul. By faith we see God. The light of the stars shines upon our eyes if only we lift our faces to the spangled sky at night; and he who trusts God enough to lift up his face in spirit will find that God shines upon his inner life with resistless power.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 8 The difficulty with our lives is that we do not hold things in their true proportions, that we have a wrong perspective. The little things made great and the great things made small — is not this the story of many an overburdened, fussy, troubled and troublesome life? Either our vision is telescopic, magnifying out of true proportion, or our vision is microscopic, minimizing out of true proportion. What we need is a normal vision that shall get a true perspective through life's details to its real issues.

April 9 God never withholds from those who have developed the power of appropriation.

May we look upward and see the angels of Thy mercy descending to minister to us.

April 10 Only strong beliefs can make strong men. The mind craves light as the heart hungers for emotion. To say that religion is of the heart alone is to forget that man is a being who thinks as well as one who feels. In a well-balanced religious life clear statements of truth are as necessary as fine impulses of emotion. As a man thinketh in his mind so is he in all the outpourings of his life.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 11 Trust your own intuitions. We are not orphans in the world. Our lives are not the brief sport of chance. That God's spirit watches over the soul, molding its character and directing its destiny, is apparent to him who puts his trust in that spirit.

April 12 It is not always possible to compel others to serve you, but no power on earth can hinder you from serving others.

May we know more and more the blessedness of those who live to serve.

April 13 Once a year there comes over many of us a passion to get close to the ground, to dig in the soil, to cultivate a garden. I wish that there might come over people the passion to cultivate the garden of the soul, to get down close to the ground of our common and natural instincts toward the good, to dig in the soil of our deepest hopes and aspirations. There is no passion in life that so lays hold of you, when once you are awakened to it, as the passion to cultivate the graces of the soul. No miser ever shows such keen zest in adding dollar upon dollar to his hoard, as the man into whose soul Jesus has flashed the vision of his life shows keenness in adding virtue to virtue.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 14 Only one thing in this world ever brings a man peace; that one thing is conformity to the will of God, which will stands eternally manifest in the Christ type of life.

Being at one with the will of God, may we move harmonious with the course of all things.

April 15 It is the eye that makes the beauties of the world; it is the ear that creates melodies of sound; it is the mind that makes the world in which we live a world of God and not one of blind chance. Life takes its coloring from our own thoughts. The very world is formed under the molding touch of our own experience. To the pure all things are pure, to the gloomy all things are gloomy, to the contented all things breathe the spirit of content, to the selfish all people are selfish, to the wicked all things seem wicked, to the virtuous all things partake somewhat of virtue.

April 16 The moment we begin to care for ourselves so that we have no thought for the larger self we begin to die like a girdled tree.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 17 The grandeur of the human soul is something beyond the power of language to describe. We may mar its beauty by impure thoughts; we may tear down its pillars of strength by evil actions; the gloom of sin may wrap itself about the broken architecture of that noble temple which God designed; the wild beasts of passion may take possession of the ruins; yet through all we feel the presence of that indescribable something that we call the God in man. Only when we catch through the broken architecture of our own human life a vision of the noble edifice that we might have builded, do we enter into the pathetic tragedy concealed in those words of Jesus, "And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell."

April 18 It is sensible, rational and biblical never to give up anything good in this world unless it is to the end of acquiring something better.

April 19 Life is made up entirely of these two things, desire and fulfilment. Our very development and growth are dependent on our desires and on their normal satisfaction. A desire that is natural and true and divine has a legitimate right, in the heavenly economy of things, to enter some day into the realization of its fulfilment.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 20 We have no right as individuals to any practice which, if universally applied, would tend to destroy society and degrade manhood.

Be this our task henceforth, to make clean and radiant the robes of our inner life.

April 21 Truth changes the world, but not truth that stands alone; it must express itself through personality. Words are mighty agencies, winged with good or bad; but only as they are vitalized by the principles of the gospel do they become a life-giving power. Personality must be charged with a divine quality, else it has no power over the common life of men. It is useless to direct our energies to high purposes, unless our faculties and all the forces of our nature have been raised to their highest power.

April 22 It is not by the physical resources of nature that this world is to be brought to God; it is not primarily through a highly developed mentality; it is through that subtle spirit power that men call love — a something that is made up of the powers of kindness and patience and benevolence and forgiveness and humility.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 23 These little things that go to make up life's daily task have their moral interpretations. The spiritual aspect of life is no less manifest in its work than in its worship.

We thank Thee for this day which is full of golden opportunities to show forth the Christ life among men.

April 24 If you think religion a supernatural thing you will likely wait for some supernatural revelation or manifestation of power. But when you see religion to be as purely natural as any other force of one's being, simply the development of those Christian virtues that are latent in every soul, then are you likely to inquire more carefully concerning the laws in accordance with which those virtues are brought to their full maturity. Your task is to arrange the conditions; God has arranged for the result.

April 25 There is only one way to live true to one's self — live true to God. To live true is to be pure and just. To live true is to love and serve one's fellow-men. To live true is to rise in heart and mind into oneness with the love and the purpose of the Father.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 26 To love things, but to love them in such a way as never to arrive at their hidden meaning and never to form any attachment to their essential reality — this is to miss utterly the whole secret of life.

April 27 There is only one thing more terrible than insanity of the mind, and that is insanity of the soul that results from the abnormality of an irreligious life.

April 28 Temperance means that the higher man is to stand guard over the lower man; one part of the man is to master and control another part of him. It is this virtue more than any other that constitutes manliness. Physical powers and intellectual gifts are things not to be despised in casting up the sum of manhood. But God wills that the spirit should rule; that love should overcome hatred, that joy should cast out bitterness, that peace should reign instead of passion, that long-suffering should take the place of anger, that gentleness should shame brutality, that goodness should triumph over evil, that faith should conquer doubt and cynicism, that meekness should destroy pride, and that temperance — king of the virtues as love is the queen — that temperance should co-ordinate and control all the powers and capacities of our being.

Guides to the Higher Life

April 29 Remember that your conscience, what I would call the moral faculty, is lord over all and is to rule in your nature absolutely. You must not question its authority. It will never fail to do the work required of it.

April 30 The beauty of the flowers is given to point us to an inner and unseen glory; the revelation of the spiritual is ours to the end that our outward and material life may be purified.

All within us that wars against the spirit, destroy. All within us that is potential divinity, do Thou nourish and bring to maturity.

May 1 What is science, O thou God of nature, but another name for truth, and all truth is of God. In the beauty of the flower we rejoice that we have such delicate interpretation of thy character. The song of the bird thrills us with the unspoken secret of love. The winds are messengers of thy spirit and in the moaning of the sea there is the vast suggestiveness of mystery. O God, thou art a great God, yet infinite in patience, careful of every slightest detail concerning our lives. Lift us up to a fuller comprehension of the majesty and beauty of thy character. Grant to us wider definitions of thy thought.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 2 The voyage of life is one of storms and high seas, and it can result in nothing else than disaster to him who is without a sure chart and compass. Every man who looks life squarely in the face realizes this truth; every man, in his serious moments, knows that life is a serious business. He knows that he needs the highest counsel as to how he shall shape his course through tempestuous experiences. He knows that drifting means shipwreck; yet in spite of his own knowledge and the disastrous experiences of others, he continues to play with the currents and to permit himself to be whirled about by the aimless eddies.

May 3 Long-suffering — what a strong, deep word it is! How it lifts us out of the petty trivialities of life! First to love, then out of love, in spite of everything, to find joy, and because of that joy to be patient and long-suffering — this is true heroism.

May 4 Sometimes the light fails us and the windows of the soul are darkened. In such an hour we are not to close them; rather look forth the more eagerly, for though the common objects of our familiar landscape may be blurred by the shadow, if only we look up we shall see that the very darkness has brought out the stars.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 5 The universal law is the law of service to those about us. There is no method by which you can hope to penetrate to the inner sanctuary of the holy temple of love other than the method of walking beneath the archway of service.

May all our deeds of service be in harmony with Thy will concerning us.

May 6 The time has come to stop calling a man good simply because of his profession or because of a peculiar tone of voice which he uses in his prayers. The good man is he who doeth good. Seeds can not live in a good soil without springing up. It is a necessity of nature that a good tree shall bud and blossom and bear fruit. And it is a necessity of man's spiritual nature that goodness shall find an outlet in deeds of justice and mercy.

May 7 The religion that nourishes itself at the fountains of human wisdom must of necessity be circumscribed, but the religion that constantly renews itself in those fountains of spiritual power opened in the heart's deepest experience, knows nothing of the limitations of time or place.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 8 To the inspired heart the realities of the spirit world are self-evident. Would we be sure of God, we are not to go to the books that seek to define his attributes. We are to turn to our own deepest experiences and trust them; trust also the experiences of other men better and stronger than ourselves. Especially are we to trust the experiences of those seers of old whose clear visions of the eternal world are described in the pages of the Bible.

May 9 God sent us into life that by trial and testing we might forge our character.

Let each hard lesson seem to us the very hand of God changing us into his own image.

May 10 Every home is one of two things: a home of coarse desire for material things, of vain pride and foolish class distinctions, of attachment to the outward and transitory and unreal; or it is a home where the world and the things of the world are used in a high ministry to imperishable ideals, a home in which are inculcated the principles of morality and religion, a home in which the real attachment is to "the inner, the eternal, the true."

Guides to the Higher Life

May 11 No man builds his faith on what he can not believe but on what he does believe. The doubts that assail you will prove to be your best friends. Do not fly from them in fear; face them like a man and wrestle with them. Never for one moment allow yourself to believe a thing because you want to believe it. Prove all things; hold fast only to that which you find to be true and good. If there are only two or three things in the whole realm of religious belief of which you are absolutely sure, you are infinitely better off than he who holds to a hundred statements not one of which he has tested and proved. A faith that has not cost such hours of intellectual and spiritual wrestling as to wring the best blood out of your veins, is not worth the paper on which it is given expression.

May 12 Why stand gazing up into heaven as though you could bring down the secrets of God from beyond the clouds? Face the responsibilities of daily life, and out of your faithfulness and loyalty to your appointed task will come God's answer to your question.

May 13 Continue to wait on the Lord, though you have never seen the passing vision of his glory.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 14 There is a deal of stubbornness in this world that passes for moral courage. It insists that you are a coward unless you march under its banner. There is a deep distinction between courage and foolhardiness. To make a fool of oneself is as bad as to be a coward. How many men have been rushed into enterprises against their judgment simply because they feared the world would call them cowardly. There is a sort of combativeness passing as moral courage which is wholly unworthy to be called such.

May 15 It is on earth that the new heaven is to be revealed to us. We are to be Christian men and women, not because we are going to die but because we are going to live.

May 16 Life is a school, but it should not be considered an end in itself. It is the training that is to fit a man for some higher sphere of usefulness. Never, until you begin to think of life in this way, as God's school, will all these mysteries and miseries and apparent inequalities begin to resolve themselves into some rational order. To the man who comes to view life as an education, all things, good and bad, have some divine meaning.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 17 Every life is fixed at the center of many concentric circles. First is the circle of one's own individuality; next comes the home circle; then that of school and college; after that are the circles of community, state and nation; finally, the vast stretching circles of the world; and beyond, the limitless expanse of the unknown. Every thought and action, every impulse and emotion, every aspiration and desire, trembles and vibrates through all the delicate and infinitely stretching net into the center of which your own individual life is woven.

May 18 Peace is not freedom from strife but freedom in strife — the freedom of those who know the truth and by it are made free. It is the life at harmony with itself.

May we rise far above the discords of earth into the very calm of heaven where peace reigneth.

May 19 Time does so many things. It takes from us our strength; it also gives it back again. Time makes all things right. It clears up misunderstandings; it heals wounds. Time tries our friendships that it may be determined whether they are welded in love or conventionality.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 20 God waits for the unfolding of each grace, touching every life with infinite care, knowing, as he does, the sacredness of that which he has created.

May we recognize the touch of God on the soul and rejoice.

May 21 The saddest thing in life is to see the window of hope shut. When desire goes out of the eye and longing out of the heart, man might as well die. As long as there is life there is hope; as long as there is hope there is life. However we may be shut in by circumstances, if only the window of hope is open we do not despair.

May 22 If we could have a community of those really believing in these things — that God is a Father and rules today; that Christ is the eternal type of a divine manhood; that goodness can never be defeated; that the Bible is our sure guide in all that pertains to the spirit life, and that the great hopes and experiences of the holiest men are not dreams, idle illusions unworthy man's supremest effort, but eternal verities leading to immortal blessedness — if only we could have those around us with such a faith as this, what more of heaven would we ask?

Guides to the Higher Life

May 23 Every soul is born to relations with every thing and every being that exists. The evolution of a soul means the awakening to a recognition of those relationships and the assuming of the duties that they involve. The man who is broadest in heart and mind is he who has come into the largest recognition of his relationship to the world of created things and beings. The culture of mind and soul has not been perfected in any large way till we have entered into a recognition of the relationships existing between our soul and the wide world of men about us and the infinite God above.

May 24 The greatest burden in life is the burden of life when it is not filled with a wholesome amount of responsibility.

May we learn how to interpret our place amid all the influences, the needs and the duties of the day.

May 25 God has not finished his work ; he is making perfect his creation today. We are working with him, working as common drudges, as hirelings under the lash, or working as artists work, with the ideal in our minds, endeavoring to fashion our lives after the pattern shown us in the mount.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 26 A lofty purpose consecrates the humblest duty. The important thing is not the kind of service but the kind of spirit with which it is performed. God finishes the flower as perfectly as he does the forest. The whole vast scope of heaven may reflect itself in a dewdrop.

May 27 One serves by being, another serves by doing; one serves his own life, another serves the life of some one else. In this world of God's every honest effort acts and reacts, so that an act put forth here is applied everywhere.

May we find in every opportunity for help Thy heavenly call, and may we learn to make real in human life and real in human institutions our visions and our ideals.

May 28 The supreme message of science to this age is, that all nature is on the side of the man who tries to rise. Evolution, development, progress are not only on her program, they are her program. For all things are rising, all worlds, all planets, all stars and suns. An ascending energy is in the universe and the whole moves on with one mighty idea and anticipation. The aspiration in the human mind is but the evolutionary tendency of the universe becoming conscious.

Guides to the Higher Life

May 29 This is a truth that searches out the noblest instincts, the loftiest aspirations, the holiest desires, and satisfies them — this truth that we may be forever living up into the realization of a higher and more spiritual life. If we would be sure of the eternal life we must make it out of the experience of today. If we would possess in our soul's being the unwavering certainty of immortal life, we must go forth into the world of our commonplace experience and strive to live as though we were immortal.

May 30 We shall never think of death aright until we think of it as a great, glad gain; and never, until we cease thinking of it as a loss, will it minister unto us the divine sweetness of the Christ consolation.

Life is enriched and not impoverished by the passing of those who nobly live.

May 31 All that is most sacred in life, most tender in our human relations, is rooted in the divine compassion. As one catches a ray of sun and through the prism breaks it into many beautiful colors, so the rays of God's love are caught by human hearts and broken into holy virtues.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 1 Only he who has the eye of an artist really sees the form and color of a rose; only he who has the eye of a spiritual artist really sees that subtler beauty of the rose, which lies about and permeates it as does the atmosphere. The highest beauty is the answering of an unseen and divine something without to an unseen and divine something within.

May the beauty of the Lord be upon us, making us lovely in his presence and strong in his grace.

June 2 We are living in a very practical and material world, and it is out of this world-stuff, if I may coin the phrase, that we are to gain our discipline. There is no way of perfecting yourself as a farmer except by working in and with the soil; there is no way of perfecting yourself as a Christian except by using the world — using the world and not abusing it. This matter of perfecting ourselves is a very real and everyday sort of thing, and the tools by which we fashion our characters are worn by the handling of many hands.

June 3 The man who reaches down his hand to another not only discovers to that other man some higher worth, but through his very act of helpfulness gains for himself a diviner estimate.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 4 There is something within us that reaches out and fastens to the world; there is also something that reaches up to God. The windows of our nature overlook the common objects of life; but it was also intended that the soul should look out and up through the pure night and see the stars. The judgment that we call down on ourselves results from the fact that we give our lives to the satisfying of the lower needs and neglect the higher needs. It is the same old temptation that the young Christ fought out in spirit on the mountain side, this everlasting temptation to thrust away the higher good for the lower gratification.

June 5 Religion is not the introduction of something new in human experience but the unfolding of our natural capacity. The soul has often gone forth in its quest for God and come back sad and despondent, only to find by some deepening experience that it had taken God with it and brought him back.

June 6 Every experience of life will lead us to God if only we let love lead us. We fail because we have such little faith in love. We trust power, or wisdom, or fame, or fear; but while we recognize that the face of love is one of extreme beauty, we fail to see the lines of strength and thus make the age-long mistake of not choosing to walk with love.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 7 Everything has its price and the price buys that thing, not something else. The miner who swings all day the heavy pick is rewarded by the strong arm, and he who is not willing to pay the miner's price must not expect the miner's reward of strength. The scholar who has given all his life to intense mental application is rewarded by the richly stored intellect, and he who is not willing to pay the scholar's price must not expect the scholar's reward. The Christian who has given himself to the search for God and who accustoms himself to make every experience of life his spiritual teacher is rewarded by an unwavering faith, and he who is not willing to pay the Christian's price must not expect the Christian's reward of faith.

June 8 Always remember when you make your appeal to facts, that you lay yourself under obligation to consider all the facts.

June 9 It is from the secret experiences of his own nature that man draws forth the revelations of spiritual truth. Without capacities for receiving the divine life no divine life would be possible to us; for of what advantage is that substance of being to which we have no native affinities to ally us? We can never know the God without till we have awakened to a consciousness of the God within.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 10 One of the strange things about life is the way in which people persist in believing that they may possess themselves of joy without entering into the life of Christ. Only those who love find happiness. To find joy in our work we must love it; to find joy in nature we must be lovers of nature; to find peace in the midst of discipline we must love God who ordains that discipline and whose spirit alone can reconcile us to it.

June 11 To make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before is as sacred as to preach a sermon or to perform an act of charity.

Bind us with loyalty to every act of service that we undertake, and help us to undertake yet more and more.

June 12 No life ever shines resplendent till it has caught the vision of Him who through suffering was made our righteousness. The roses bloom and the birds sing because somewhere in the universe are fountains of life and fragrance and song. We love because somewhere are eternal fountains of divine love. We love because He first loved us.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 13 So long as a man considers his own lot in life and accustoms himself to an enumeration of his own blessings, just so long has he much for which to thank God. It is when he turns from himself and begins to dwell enviously upon the good fortune of his neighbor that trouble begins. He sees what he regards as exceptional blessings in the life of his neighbor, but the difficulties and cares that those blessings involve — these things he does not see and therefore does not consider. The moment you turn your vision to another man's life you see his blessings but you miss his cares. Most of the unhappiness in your life arises from that vicious habit into which you have fallen of comparing yourself with others whom you deem more fortunate.

June 14 Every law of which we have any knowledge is supreme only until it comes into conflict with some higher law.

June 15 Education comprehends all that relates to the development of the five senses, the perfecting of the muscular and nervous systems, the improvement of the powers of understanding, the training to an appreciation of the beautiful in art and nature and the cultivation of the moral instincts. The highest aim of education is manhood and womanhood.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 16 The richest friendships come from trusting people in spite of themselves. It is better to trust twelve men and find one a traitor and eleven true than to trust none.

Keep Thou every door of our heart and let no enemy enter therein and let no friend depart.

June 17 When once we have heard Christ's call to discipleship we can never quite escape it. The love that he quickens may die down through faithlessness, but I think it never quite goes out on the altar of one's life.

June 18 Christianity is the art of learning to be faithful to other people in the same way that Jesus was faithful. To be loyal as he was loyal means to be loyal in spite of everything. Yet the hardest thing a man was ever asked to do is to stand forth in this world of selfishness and bitter cruelty, an example of simple, Christ-like friendliness. To stand by a man with loyalty and faithfulness after he has betrayed, denied, proved utterly false to you, is the divinest thing that was ever done on this earth.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 19 The world has never seen such another lover of men as Jesus of Nazareth. His love was courageous; it dared to rebuke. His love was tender; it stooped to comfort. His love was redemptive; it sought to purify. His love was divine — so divine that it could forgive even to the uttermost.

June 20 When once we have learned the music of life, how wondrous it is!

May our hearts be attuned to the holiness and harmony of Thy kingdom.

June 21 The purpose of the best educational work is to make the very most of the material in hand; it is not primarily to pave the way to success; it is to make us worthy of any success and strong to meet any failure. There is a certain kind of success for which the student who becomes exalted by the ideals of scholarship is totally unfitted. Education that is worthy the name is the transferring of emphasis from circumstances to character. With that kind of success that is measured by circumstances rather than by character, all who have begun to taste the joys of true culture and have entered into the companionship of those who have lived in the realm of ideals, have no relationship whatever.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 22 There are two ways of seeking rest, the effort to liberate oneself from the exactions of labor, and the effort to find one's way into that realm of restfulness, where currents of refreshing power flow through the soul as steadily as tides flow through the sea. The higher rest is not periodic but continuous; not one of inactivity but one of equipoise; not a rest of inertia but a rest of balance. However fast the great wheel whirls, at the very center it is still. In its deepest analysis rest is what Jesus called peace of soul, peace in the very midst of battle.

June 23 The mind should not be dependent for happiness on scenes and things from without. The soul should be so awakened that when no flash comes from without it can light up its own recesses and turn dens into palaces.

Happiness comes not from without but from within. It comes not from the power of possession but from the power of appreciation.

June 24 God is imaged forth in this creation quite as truly, though not with the same fulness, as in the revelation of the Christ. To grasp vitally the thought that God made the world, makes that world a symbol of the perfect heaven wherein dwelleth the Most High.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 25 We may hope that our vacation season will enforce at least this one fact: that we shall never make out of our characters all that we hope to make out of them, till we have found not only our work and learned how to do it, but also our Bethany and learned how to rest therein; learned where we may find God, how to fill our lives with all that is full of faith and hope and love, with all the instincts and aspirations that pertain to the spiritual life, so that as we go out again into the midst of the world it will not be an effort to lead helpful, purposeful lives; we shall walk on through the world in such a manner that men will somehow feel that God has passed that way.

June 26 There can be no rest except that which is rooted in peace of the soul.

Shut us away from the strife and clamor of the world into the infinite peace and silence of the eternal love.

June 27 God's ways are the ways that demand time. All things in this world that are done well — all the art, all the literature, all the beauty, all life's perfection whatever it may be — come to us only as the result of labor, labor that has been content to wait.

Guides to the Higher Life

June 28 We have toiled so long and earnestly at our task, our eyes have grown weary and our hands are numb. Are we so burdened with the doing of many things that we can not heed the invitation, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile?" Do we fear the desert? Do we shrink from its solitude and its silence? Have we not learned that in the desert one is always conscious of the companionship of the stars?

June 29 That which breaks down so many men is not the work of life but its monotonous uniformity; not the strain but the steady strain. The workers of the world suffer for want of leisure, the idlers of the world suffer for want of activity. The law of rhythm demands of each its supplemental quality. A violin that is unstrung will emit no music, while a violin that is left strung soon loses the fine quality of cadence. A cloud is never seen at its best till pierced by a sunbeam. Activity never outlines itself as a thing divine till it is clothed upon by the joyousness of rest.

June 30 Sometime we shall understand that the passing weariness from without means so little, while the steadiness of purpose to wait on the Lord and bide his time means everything.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 1 The hardest thing in this world is to wait. But to make up our mind that we are doing the thing that ought to be done, that God in his providence has set our life in just the place that he would have it, is to enter upon the unknown days with the power of the undivided, undistracted life that rests in God.

July 2 If only you could see deep enough into the lives of those against whom you often murmur with bitterness, I think you would find them not more fortunate than yourselves. I long ago learned one lesson that has stood me in good stead — never to estimate the blessing and good fortune and happiness of a man's life by anything that the eye can see. O the tragic mistake that the men and women of today are making! We are missing the joy and satisfaction of that which we have through the unheroic and disgraceful craving for that which we have not.

July 3 Men are glorified and God is glorified in them, in the measure that they serve their fellow-men. This, the serving our fellow-men, is something possible every day and every hour of life. It needs no church, no creed, no profession. Where you stand in the busy whirl of life, there you may serve, there you may act.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 4 May those whom we have placed in authority be so filled with the divine wisdom that there shall result from their leadership the strengthening of the people in righteousness. May all things be so ordered by their endeavors that truth and justice shall prevail, that peace and happiness shall bless our beloved land, that religion shall be spread abroad and that the divine will shall be the standard of our national honor.

July 5 As soon as you know a thing to be ideally true it is your duty to stand for it and to make it really true.

Being obedient to the knowledge and vision of today, may we have a larger knowledge and a more luminous vision tomorrow.

July 6 When shall we learn that waiting on the Lord has not only a spiritual but a distinct hygienic value; that the secret of health and of a life of prolonged labor is to be found in a man's religiousness? Even eagles may be weary, but as they mount up, the swift and buoyant currents of air bear them easily, so that the flight that near earth was laborious, above the clouds becomes a joy and a relaxation.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 7 It is not hard to love nature or art, not hard to be enraptured of beauty, not hard to maintain our joyousness as we are borne up on wings of poetry and music into some imaginary realm of gold. But to love men with their hard faces and their cold hearts and their grasping hands—this is the hardest thing in life.

July 8 It is a sign of our supremacy in this creation of God's that at birth we are so far away from all ideals of perfection.

There will come a time when we shall be so tuned to the laws of our nature that we shall love the things that God loves and hate the things that God hates.

July 9 Man has within him certain spiritual aspirations and instincts. Throughout all the ages he has longed for God; the deepest desire of the human heart has always been to find rest in a divine and an immortal life. Is it possible that these longings can be meaningless? Does the child reach out his hand to grasp something tangible, while the prayer of the saint is sent forth into an empty void? Are not these gropings of the soul as sure of the corresponding reality that calls them forth as the senses are sure of the world of which they have cognizance?

Guides to the Higher Life

July 10 Unless this world is the plaything of blind chance there is some divine meaning in the breaking into wreckage of the dreamships of the soul. It is not for nothing that our ships have been broken. There is a spiritual significance in every wrecked hope of our lives.

July 11 The purpose of a thing will always be found at the core of its nature. If the deepest passion of the rosebud is to blossom, then the rosebud must have been created to blossom. The nature of a thing determines its destiny.

The real power of life lies in the divinity that is developing at the core of our being.

July 12 We have come upon an age when men, in their passion for reality, are sifting all things — laws, customs, institutions, everything. The church can not escape. You can not escape. The world is sifting you. It is asking questions about your religion, and you will appeal in vain to the doctrine, or the book, or the worship. The world cares for only one thing: are you performing some deed or speaking some word that shall go to bless the great company of those who are footsore and weary?

Guides to the Higher Life

July 13 We are unhappy because we have not yet learned the secret of happiness, unhappy because we are searching in the wrong places for happiness, unhappy not because we were born for trouble, but because, born into trouble, we have not yet learned to gather out of it joy, peace and contentment.

July 14 There is no law, no principle, no gospel so virtuous and vital, so inherently divine in itself, but that it may be converted into a destructive force by over-emphasis.

July 15 Most of the great accomplishments of history have been wrought out under the influence of beauty. The beauty of the stars has touched the sense of the sublime within and created our astronomy; the beauty of the mountains has lured men forth with hammer and chisel and given us a geology; the sober beauty of ruined cities has appealed to the imagination, producing the historian; the beauty of foliage and flower has stirred men with delight and led to the careful observations that have resulted in the study of botany. Were it not for the sweet and subtle influence of beauty there would be no inspiration in science, no object in philosophy, no passion in religion.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 16 God is not in some far distant space but here in every experience of mind and heart, if only we could see him. The revelation that God makes to our consciousness is not something mysterious and wholly inexplicable, something apart from all the other experiences of our inner life, something that can be set off in our nature by itself. That revelation is in the ordinary loves and friendships, in the ordinary pains and struggles and victories of our everyday life.

July 17 We can never know all the truth in this life, but we can know enough to serve us as a faithful guide.

Let us not seek to know the mysteries of the universe but the duties of the day, assured that Thou wilt give to the faithful, humble seeker direction and guidance.

July 18 The Christian life is both a power and a practice. Have we undertaken its practice without experiencing its power? If so we are working from the circumference in rather than from the center out. Both power and performance must receive due regard, but we should never forget that power must always precede performance.

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July 19 True heroism lies underneath the commonplace of life. It asks no higher wages of virtue than the privilege of going on and on, plucking out of weariness the sweet consciousness of laboring, sacrificing and suffering with God.

We can achieve greatness simply by handling our common tasks in a way that will administer to larger ends.

July 20 The first aim of life should be to find our work, to know the one thing for which we are adapted, then to work at it like a very Hercules. The second aim should be to find our Bethany, to learn where those scenes are in the midst of which we can gather the strength and courage needed in the active duties of life.

July 21 The higher righteousness calls for an imitation of Christ, an imitation in the sense that his spirit is to be reproduced in us, and through us is to make itself felt in the practical and complex affairs of daily life. To seek slavishly to imitate Christ is to fall back into the method of the lower righteousness, which seeks always to reproduce the form of life rather than its essential power.

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July 22 Religion is simply that love which comes from God into the soul in answer to our yearning desire and our waiting confidence. We know God as we know the sun, which shines upon our bodies and warms them. God shines upon the inner life and love is born. To study the theory of light is not to be warmed by it, and to study systematic theology, whether in a seminary or in a church, is not to know God but simply to know something about him. To know God is to have him bathe the soul till it is pure through love and fragrant with all the graces of charity.

July 23 Life is given to man for life's sake. It is not life that makes the burden, it is the lack of it.

We do not realize that the most important thing in life is life itself.

July 24 Jesus' commandment, which he characterized as the "new commandment" under which the world henceforth was to live, put man first and settled forever that men were to come to God and the God life, to heaven and the heavenly character; by way of their love for humanity.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 25 Loveliness of form and color always has this mission to perform, to point us to a beauty that is unseen and eternal. All that is of the earth passes away and is gone. Were there no immortal meanings wrapped up in this earthly beauty, how it would mock us! But the heart is comforted when we think that every splendor of the dying day is matched by some unseen and undying splendor. Would we seize upon a loveliness that is unfailing, a harmony more divine and more lasting than any harmony of form or color or sound, we must turn to Christ and find in him that final revelation of spiritual beauty by which the human interprets to the human the secret of its own being.

July 26 I believe that God loves health of body, cheerfulness of disposition, a mind filled with clean and happy thoughts and a spirit that rejoices in all the good things of this created world.

July 27 There are many virtues that one's character develops in the midst of toil, but there are powers and capabilities of the soul that can not be developed except in leisure. Imagination, intuition, conscience, reverence are capacities of the human soul that can be developed only in the hour of quiet.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 28 Not down and back are we to look for God but up and on. He spoke yesterday, he speaks today. If the sky is gray then out of the cloud comes his voice; if the glare of sunlight falls on sea and land, then is his image reflected in the sunbeam.

May Thy voice fill the hearing of our soul and make us glad with the very gladness of heaven.

July 29 Evolution has made God more necessary to all our thinking. The old arguments have been destroyed by being fulfilled. To try to account for things, to try to think, to try anything except on the basis of assuming God, is utterly impossible and must lead to an intellectual confusion that is chaotic and maddening. That way lies madness, not only of the mind but of the soul.

July 30 There are the three windows of the soul — that of faith, that of hope and that of love. We may shut these windows if we will; we may darken the chamber of the soul; but so surely as we fail to keep open the windows of faith and hope and love, so surely will life turn into bitterness and all the experiences of our days come at last to mock us.

Guides to the Higher Life

July 31 Under the necessity of obeying something, obey the highest. Obligated to choose a master, choose Christ.

What a man obeys in this world makes or mars him. Unless the object of our obedience is worthy of the highest in us there can be no exalted character.

August 1 Emerson was right in saying that no other man's experience, far less the record of any other man's experience, can prove a satisfying evidence of immortality. If the immortal tide of life within your soul is at its flood, eternal existence is so real a thing that you need no other evidence. But if your life is selfish, if the flood gates of love do not swing open into your soul, all the arguments of all the centuries will accomplish little in convincing you of the reality of the ageless life. It is only through the quickening and developing of your own spiritual powers that you can rise to a Christian faith in immortality.

August 2 As every argument has wrapped up in it some conclusion, so every vice has wrapped up in it some punishment, every virtue has wrapped up in it some reward.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 3 For the Christian there is nothing in all this wide universe to fear.

In the assurance that we are shut into the hand of God as in a defense that can not be violated, help us to rejoice and still rejoice.

August 4 The instinctive longing for rest is not an ignoble thing; it is the outreaching of a nature that instinctively feels that it was made for rest and that out of the wearying toil of the present is to emerge the heavenly repose of the future. When the boy has finished the task set him by his father he leaps away to his play with bounding heart. That play is in itself a work, yet is the boy's nature so tuned in harmony to it that it becomes the joy of his life. When we shall have finished the tasks given us by our Father we shall break forth into that new life with a noble joy. Our activity will still be the activity of work but for us the work will be play, for the heart will be perfectly tuned to the effort without.

August 5 Little by little men are learning the simple and infinitely sweet lesson of the gospel, that religion is nothing more than love at work in the world, trying to beautify human life.

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August 6 "Follow me" on the lips of Jesus meant the mount of transfiguration quite as much as it meant the valley of sacrifice; it meant that his disciples were to listen when he spoke of God quite as much as they were to listen when he spoke of human society, that they were to go with him apart for some holy hour of prayer no less than when he visited the poor on some mission of mercy.

August 7 Speak to us by silence or by sound, by the spirit that is invisible or by the powers that appear.

Teach us the heavenly speech that we may learn to talk with Thee.

August 8 We are enwrapped by spiritual realities, but our eyes are blind and we do not see them. It is related of one of the richest mines in the world that it was discovered by tearing up a shrub from the hillside. So much of richness would be revealed in the little things of life if only we would look carefully at all that seems so slight, compelling ourselves to search for the moral significance. We need to have formed within us the purpose to use the ordinary things of life as spiritual agencies.

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August 9 A man does not arrive at contentment without great struggle, without time and patient waiting, without many failures and discouragements. Day by day he must learn his lesson, day by day he must examine himself whether he be in the way of attainment. A contented mind is the richest possession in life. God has made such a treasure possible only to the highest endeavor.

August 10 Rest is very much like knowledge; it does not possess us, we must possess it; we must reach forth and grasp it. We live out our lives and do our work, enwrapped by a whole atmosphere of rest of which we are totally unconscious.

August 11 Rewards and judgments are as sure and natural in the spirit world as is the harvest that springs out of the seed. It is popular to scoff at many of the old notions of judgment, but here is a view of the judgment at which men can not scoff. For judgment, present and future, viewed from this standpoint, is not an arbitrary but a natural thing. Every man is his own judge and he judges himself according to the law of his own nature.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 12 Every true and sacred impulse is a divine call to open the soul heavenward that God may breathe into it fulness of life and richness of love.

August 13 The only blasphemy is to be false to the highest you know. To be true to an undivine principle in nature and false to a divine principle in the soul — this would be the crowning blasphemy, the real sin against the Holy Ghost.

August 14 Those who passed through the Jewish temple went first through the outer court, then through the inner court, within and yet within, till they came at last to the holy of holies. Lift the veil he who dares, for within is the Shekinah; God dwelleth there. The world may pass through the outer court of your life, companions may come into the inner court, friends may sit down in the temple within, those whom you most love may be ushered into the secret chamber; but beyond that is the sanctuary. No human being has ever drawn the veil aside. Only the spirit of the living God can enter there. Unless that inner sanctuary has been filled with the Shekinah and beautified by the companionship of God, believe me, the deepest and holiest life possible to you, by you has never been known.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 15 Let us face all the realities of life but face them as those who have walked through the King's country with Christ and are therefore not afraid.

Taking ourselves out of the duties of life is to miss the opportunities we have for making it better.

August 16 Faithfulness to one another is the logical and spiritual outcome of a fulness of faith in God. There is no way by which people can be persuaded into faithfulness except through those impelling motives that spring out of faith. That day when the world loses its faith in Jesus' God it will lose its hold on Jesus' ideal of the moral life. The vision of the Son of Man searched into all the deep places of the soul, and he saw, with a profoundness of insight that has never been equaled, that only faith in God could lead men to any high and heroic realization of faithfulness to one another.

August 17 Religion is not an artificial grafting on of something to the natural life; it is the unfolding to their fulness and perfection of those powers that are native in the soul from the first.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 18 Only the man who has courage enough to see and to appreciate the full danger of his course, who is so sensitive that a real struggle is necessary to overcome his predisposition to inaction — only such a man is courageous in the highest sense, as he walks forward to meet fate or to bear the burden of some martyrdom. It is not courageous to oppose public opinion if the regard of men means nothing to you. It is not courageous to bear pain if you have little nerve sensibility. It is not courageous to push into the darkness if life is so distasteful that you do not love the light. Courage is measured more by what you overcome than by what you do.

August 19 Suffering serves as a check to sin. It corrects the evil that exists in the soul and in society. Having granted the fact of sin, we can understand how much of the world's suffering is in reality a blessing.

The most cheerful people, those who have the sweetest faith in life and in all life's issues, are those who have had most to endure.

August 20 May we have only this one aim, to abate the transitory ills and to be faithful to the eternal goodness.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 21 Are you trying to figure God out with a pencil and paper, are you striving to reason him out from the pages of a book? Put pencil and book aside. Go forth into the midst of this toiling, sinning and suffering world and prove yourself a brother to men. In working out and establishing the relations of brotherhood, you will enter into a realization of the divinity that broods over you and over the lives of all men. If a man know not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he know God whom he hath not seen?

August 22 The value of our service to the world is not determined by the length of time we serve men but by the character and enthusiasm which we put into our service.

Very much of the failure of Christian service is due to the fact that men are continually trying to give that which they have not.

August 23 Love holds the same relation to all things else that in the physical world gravitation holds to all the various forms of matter. It is the power that binds into unity; it is the pledge of the spiritual solidarity of the race.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 24 O fatal mistake when we search for happiness in the wrong world realm, when we endeavor to change our circumstances without ever striving to change our character! It is not man's adjustment of his life to the world but the adjustment of his life to the profoundest needs and aspirations of his nature that brings him happiness; it is not being in harmony with the existing conditions about him but being in harmony with God, the eternal spirit of things, that brings him unspeakable peace.

August 25 A man is first of all a man; after that he is what his calling makes him.

We become like that about which we think; we are made over into that which we most admire.

August 26 It is by exploring that which is material that we can understand, that we come finally to an appreciation of that which is spiritual, the undying reality that we need to understand. The love that grows up in the heart, the thought that grows up in the mind, the reverence that grows up in the soul — all pass through this same process of natural growth, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

Guides to the Higher Life

August 27 Avoid the associations of life that limit the soul's horizon.

May we have the open vision of the prophet that we may see how weak is all that men deem strong and how strong is that which men are wont to consider weak.

August 28 The commandments of God are a part of the very process of things, wrapped up in the constitution of matter and spirit. They are not commands given from without but laws written in flower and stream and star; injunctions wrought into bone and muscle and nerve. God has written every commandment of the Bible in man's nature. It was written there, that commandment, long before there was a tablet of stone or a sermon on the mount.

August 29 To the poet the very stars of heaven sing together in joy; to the prophet every holy thought breathes a song, and all the yearnings and strifes and aspirations of a soul blend into a spiritual symphony. . . Pray God, the day of creeds has past, the day of symphonies has come, or rather, may not our creeds be symphonies, every statement of faith giving forth some soul-stirring harmony of love and aspiration?

Guides to the Higher Life

August 30 The real tragedy of your life consists in that which you have lost. Can you not see how the struggle that you are making to live righteously in the world is made the harder because of sins of omission or commission that the past records? The early years of your life presented certain distinct opportunities for moral and religious development. These opportunities you did not improve and the result has been that you have fought during all these later years under severe handicap.

August 31 Worldliness does not consist in a man's attachment to the world or to the things of the world but in the spirit that moves him to the misuse of that which was designed to minister to his manhood.

We are abusing the world when we so use it that others are injured thereby.

September 1 Man is created for both work and rest. Rest is the end, work the method by which rest is to be achieved. Our life here is a continuous struggle toward the harmonious adjustment of external and internal conditions. Perfection means the attainment of this harmony between the inner life and the outer circumstances.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 2 If once your inner life is right it will express itself as God would wish. Turn to the life within rather than to the life without; seek not so much to possess as to appreciate; make your own life what you would wish the lives of others to be; as the athlete develops his arm, as the scholar disciplines his thought, do you by worship and service cultivate the spiritual powers of appreciating all that is most divine in life; tune your soul to the rhythm of the deeper harmony, then let God touch the hidden chords, and all the inner chambers of your soul will be filled with music.

September 3 A selfish man is unacquainted with the high ecstasies of joy; one who is self-centered is in the very nature of things far removed from peace and tranquillity of soul.

September 4 It is a church of the spirit that we need today. We need scholars to define for us the literary structure of our Bible; we need theologians to outline for us a system of doctrine that shall meet the new need of the day; but above all else we need those who will emphasize the primitive simplicity of the gospel, who will present religion to the world as a life in which man may be conscious of a spiritual presence that strengthens and blesses him.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 5 The inevitable result of making one thing secular and another thing sacred is that men will attempt two standards — the living of one life that is secular and another life that is sacred. The principle that holds us together in the communion of saints ought to hold us together in the communion of trade and industry. The supreme law for the individual is love wherever that individual may be found; the chief law for society is the law of love.

September 6 Education does not mean that you are to learn things but that you are to learn how to do things. Education does not mean simply that you are to master the highest and noblest thought in the world, but that through this mastery you are to acquire the power to do your own thinking.

September 7 The true and eternal priesthood is that of personal service, the priesthood by which a man so ministers to others as to make them think of God. This is the priesthood for which the world waits. Wherever there stands a man whose name means righteousness and whose influence makes for peace and whose hands are filled with beautiful ministries for the poor — wherever such a man is found, it will be seen that other men gather round him.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 8 Let your thought and study have some practical relation to your life. Fitting for the voyage of life, you should keep the voyage and the destination ever before you. Are you steering the ship of your life by the star of some lofty purpose? Be sure that it is only a question of time when the life that drifts with the current shall be dashed against the rocks. The wrecks with which the coast is strewn are there because, with no purpose, young people allowed themselves to drift with the current. Half the battle of life is won when you have formed your purpose and see it gleaming there in the distance like a star.

September 9 Behold, our life is short and our work is great!

May we quietly wait, patiently work, lovingly live and peacefully die. Let this be our record to the end of time.

September 10 It is not by ridding ourselves of the burdens that rest upon us but by gathering into our own intellectual and soul experiences more of the life of humanity and of God, that we are to realize our dream of true blessedness.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 11 The time has come for all men who believe that Jesus has the right idea of God to say so plainly and without equivocation. It is time for men who believe that the conception of God wrought into medieval theology is not only wrong philosophically, but, ethically considered, immoral — it is time for such to speak out plainly. The church can not afford to be behind the world in ethical sensibility.

September 12 The right-minded person finds supreme joy in obedience; he cares to know only if the object of his obedience is worthy.

May we be obedient to what we understand to be Thy holy purpose in our lives.

September 13 The thing to be regretted is, not that we enjoy the material things of life, but that we have so fastened ourselves to the things of the earth that we have shut out of our souls the greater capabilities, the greater requirements; that we have fastened ourselves to material things in such a way that we are not developing the gifts of imagination and intuition, the qualities of faith and hope and reverence, that would lift us up into communion with all that is spiritual and eternal and true. This is really the pathetic thing in life.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 14 Wherever you find among men a passion for righteousness, integrity in business, kindness of heart and culture of soul, sympathy for the afflicted, charity for the wayward, wherever you find depth and solidity of character, there the kingdom of heaven is being realized.

September 15 This is the spirit with which you should take up the work of your life: do it bit by bit, as though you were working, as the old Greeks thought they worked, under the direct supervision of the gods. Leave the issue of that work with Him who planned it. Take no more on your shoulders than God places upon them. Accustom yourself to breathe the atmosphere of rest; open your nature to the sweet influences of peace. This is God's world and you are not responsible for it. He who originated the plan is sufficient for its execution.

September 16 To the eye of today the material world is only a veil hiding some deeper reality. We marvel that men could have been so dogmatic as to affirm that there can be nothing else than that which our five senses recognize. It may be that there are other senses latent in man, yet to be developed. It may be that if our present senses were more keenly developed we should recognize a world lying about us of which we are now ignorant.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 17 There can be no real and abiding happiness without sacrifice. The happiness of a scholar — does it not come as the result of countless sacrifices? The happiness of a mother — is not its very foundation sacrifice? Our greatest joys do not result from our efforts toward self-gratification but from a loving and spontaneous service to other lives. The simplest and hardest lesson to learn in life is this: joy comes not to him who seeks it for himself but to him who seeks it for other people.

September 18 Christ is the great exemplar of true kindness. Not many of us can follow him in the great deeds of his life, but we may imitate him in those lesser ministries that just as truly reflect the power and beauty of his character.

Bind us with loyalty to that resplendent ideal which Thou hast given us in the Christ.

September 19 The ideal of life is not to enwrap the soul as lightly as possible in the garment of faith, but to enswathe it so richly that the weary soul of every struggling child of God may nestle down into the warmth and tenderness of the divine love.

Guides to the Higher Life

September 20 The fact that one man has seen a falling star is greater evidence than the fact that a hundred men have failed to see it. The testimony of ten millions of men spiritually blind is not equal to the spiritual utterance of one Christ, who arose a great while before it was day that he might go into a desert place and pray.

September 21 Every good thing is one of the powers of God to deliver us from evil.

Fill us with the strength of him who knows his weakness and leans ever upon Thee.

September 22 There are two kinds of waiting, that of the man who stands still and that of the man who leaps forward to serve. If we say of a host that he waited upon his guest we do not mean that he stood waiting for the guest to reward some expectation; we mean that he was eager to serve that guest in every possible way and therein found his chief reward. So when we speak of waiting on the Lord we do not mean that we stand or kneel with folded hands till the Lord grant us a blessing; rather do we mean the eager pushing forward to those moral and spiritual tasks of life, in the performance of which we gain our strength and pass out and up into the atmosphere of refreshment.

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September 23 You say of a painting that it is beautiful. In quite as real a way may not a thought be beautiful, or an emotion? This is the beauty of the Christ, a beauty that chastens itself out of love and self-sacrifice, out of compassion for the poor and suffering; and in so far as we rise to the highest conception of life we shall come to regard this as the true and enthralling beauty — a beauty of soul and mind and heart.

September 24 The most pathetic thing that one can witness is to see people meet suffering in the wrong way. The experience is hard and bitter enough in itself, yet it would seem a pity that men should miss this only possible way of attaining blessedness.

Pain is a secret and silent guide, leading us through dangers, inspiring us with fortitude and making us strong in character.

September 25 May charity unto those who are unfortunate be the constant thought of our lives. Do Thou bring home to every heart the searching question, "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"

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September 26 In every transgression there goes out of human life something that can never come back. God may remit the sin, but the penalty for that sin must burn itself out in the body or soul of the offender. Out of all in your life that is left today God will make the most, but even God himself can not give you back that which you lost yesterday.

September 27 Life seems a thing of mean consequence because there are within us the imitations of something high and noble. We speak of the common, the little things of life. Strange that we do not see that there is nothing common.

May all the daily toil of our mortal lives be as sacramental as our prayers.

September 28 It is natural and easy to live, but it is exceedingly difficult to live well. It is a most familiar truth, hidden for a long time but known in later years, that individual life which is of worth or beauty must be wrought out carefully and patiently. One law holds true in all parts of God's kingdom, the law that all things, mind and matter, must be wrought upon till they shall show signs of labor.

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September 29 The cultivation of the spiritual qualities of the soul, the developing of the power of appreciating the best in God's world, is the greatest endeavor of human life. Every man who was ever of any worth to the world has devoted the energies of his life to the spiritual culture of himself. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," it is written, but thou thyself art the model, and the model must always come before any reproduction of it. It is by first appreciating the richness of our own lives that we enter into a deep realization of the worth of other lives. We must first experiment on our own lives before we can hope to experiment successfully on the lives of those about us.

September 30 The holier a man's life becomes, the more refined, yet penetrating and dangerous, become the temptations that assail him.

However much one may be shut up by circumstances to the evil, no man was ever yet shut up to the necessity of choosing the wrong.

October 1 As we have learned that Thy life is within our life, so have we learned that we must place ourselves within the spiritual current of existence and avail ourselves of the spiritual forces about us in order to grow.

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October 2 The joys of life are gifts from thy hand, our Father. The solemn beauty of this autumn lays hold of us and stirs within us all those subtle spiritual suggestions of a divine glory, a glory hidden from mortal sight but revealed to the eye of faith. The fulness of the harvest rejoices us and the splendor of the over-arching sky fills us with happiness. We are strengthened by a holy consciousness of thy providence and care.

October 3 Man is so constituted that his affection must be centered on something. The only way to escape from a base passion is to be mastered by a holy love. We must stop in the midst of shows or push our way forward into the realm of reality. We are to choose which we will serve: the outer thing which is transitory and unreal, or the inner ideal which is eternal and true.

October 4 Faith in God is the welcome that a man gives to everything that is godlike, everything that is true, everything that is beautiful, everything that is good. You are a man of faith in just the measure that you have laid hold upon, appropriated and made a part of your being these great realities of truth and beauty and goodness which are God.

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October 5 The greatest power that can flow into any human life is the power of overcoming evil. The great purpose of your life, whatever minor aims you may have, should be the single purpose of bearing witness to that which is divinely and eternally true. In the accomplishment of this purpose build in behind your life all the crowning associations of hallowed friendship; then turn that life to God; let him draw you up into the consciousness of his love and fatherly tenderness. This alone can give you the power of overcoming evil. This alone can help you to realize the greatest mission a man can have upon earth — to be in himself and in the life he lives, a simple witness unto that which is spiritually true.

October 6 Heaven is the highest life possible; hell is the missing of that life.

If there is one thing above others that a man should fear, it is the blighting of his inner life.

October 7 Only the love of the Father, which means a full and joyous realization that the Father loves us, only the love of the Father can ennoble and purify one's love for the world, can make that love a holy thing.

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October 8 Is your house a home that ministers to the inner peace of soul, to the eternal and unseen beauty, to the truth that is real and abiding? Do the dwellers in that home not only eat their bread with physical joy but learn in so doing to thank God out of grateful hearts? Does every luxury, as well as every necessity, minister to their inner being, building them up in character and giving to their bearing those finer graces learned only in a true home? Then is your home a home indeed, a home that ministers to the enrichment of the spiritual life, a home that is the abiding place of the Most High.

October 9 To believe in the religion of Jesus is not to hold the doctrines of this or that creed; it is to believe that his way of life, the way of love and service to other people, is the true way.

May we be of one mind and one heart, in pity relieving, in mercy forgiving and in honor preferring one another.

October 10 As the birds in these autumn days fly far away toward the south, seeking light and warmth, so may we seek the high realms of faith, where Thy truth dispels every shadow and where Thy love warms every aspiring instinct of our being.

Guides to the Higher Life

October 11 As it was said of Christ that he set his face toward Jerusalem, so may we set our faces toward the accomplishment of every waiting duty.

Let each morning and evening find us ready for Thy perfect will.

October 12 To turn away from the unknown were to turn away from the highest call to heroism that time or life can make. Who are our heroes? Are they not those who have dared the unknown, men who have fought their way into dark continents, men who have been shipwrecked on strange seas, men who have met and triumphed over every challenge of hardship? Are there those with so little passion for exploration that the age-long dash for the north pole seems to them madness? Were it not a shame for men ever to talk about the unknown north and never sacrifice a life to reach its further boundary? Are we such weaklings that we must weigh lives against the appeal to heroism? Where is it written that it is necessary men should live? The only necessity is that one should play his part like a man.

October 13 We need to remember that the method of nature is never revolution but always evolution. The vision of the new order of things dawns upon the world through a dissolving view of the old.

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October 14 One practical service of beauty in the economy of life is found in the manner in which it feeds our enthusiasm. You can not have failed to notice how people who are engaged in artistic pursuits throw themselves with all the energy of their being into the performance of their work; it is because they are infatuated with the thing that they have set themselves to do. Other men may labor from a sense of duty or necessity; they work because they must. Some dream or vision of beauty is before them and their passion is to realize and give expression to that dream.

Give us a love for goodness, a passion for truth and a thrill for everything that Thou hast made beautiful.

October 15 The laws of God are simply the will of God manifested. We see not law so much as the continuous working of the immanent God. Slowly we are learning to spell nature with a capital N.

October 16 The primary need of the age is not a system of truth but a vital, inspiring personality. The greatest thing known to man is man. We can comprehend the divine only in the measure that we ourselves become divine.

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October 17 Every effort on your part that tends to give the world of men a more complete mastery over the world of nature, is promoting the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Every thought that you throw into the scale of truth, every insight that you give some person into his own possibilities, every inherently honest deed that you perform, every act of service that you undertake, every blow at ignorance, every rebuke of vice and wickedness, every implantation of faith and hope and love in other hearts, helps to bring down to earth the kingdom of heaven.

October 18 I can not think of a more terrible thing in this world of God's than to fight a truth.

Nothing can be true in one place and false in another.

October 19 Disposition and character are the chief factors in the achievement of a life's happiness. We speak of the world as being the realm without, but the widest realm is the world within. Here within this unseen world we live out our lives. If only we can reach the mountain peaks of this inner world of character our eyes will be greeted by an outlook resplendent with beauty and glory.

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October 20 God does not judge us by our professions nor yet by our actual experiences; he judges us by our spirit. The moral man who makes no profession, but whose spirit of benevolence and sacrifice and unselfish consideration of those about him is greater than that of his Christian neighbor, is more religious than that neighbor and stands nearer to God. Life is not the result of what we are not but of what we are.

October 21 It is only as a man is overflowing in his own life that he can give to the lives of those about him. If somehow we can unite ourselves with God so that down through life's activities there shall be a divine power, then we shall have at last the true secret of living.

Every life that is rich enriches other lives; every life that is inspired inspires others; every live soul, as it comes into contact with another soul, sends a thrill of life through it.

October 22 To learn how to act and how to teach may well employ our most earnest endeavor, but to know how to think and to meditate and to pray, to know how to go apart into the rest and the solitude of God — this also is not without its immeasurable value.

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October 23 The way of Jesus is the only true way for a man to live in this world, the only way that is heroic, the only way that brings blessedness and opens out into the eternal life.

If we desire the fame of the world rather than unbroken honor, have mercy upon us. If we desire to be great as the world counts greatness rather than good as God counts goodness, have mercy upon us.

October 24 Evolution has not in any sense displaced God; it has simply unfolded his method of creation. It has revealed the truth that instead of God's making man at once, out of hand, thousands and thousands of years have gone to the forming of the temple of man's body. And the long way that we have come is a promise and pledge of the long way that we have to go.

October 25 There is a veil between nature and the eyes of man that needs to be torn asunder. Then we should see how marvelous is the world in which we dwell. Life would not cease to be a tragedy, but it would become a divine tragedy. Life would cease to be a drudgery; it would become a worship.

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October 26 Goodness is a vigorous, positive virtue. To be good means to be good for something. A thing is good when it is realizing the purpose of its being. A good man is not one who simply abstains from evil but one who makes his life a positive force for righteousness. Goodness thus interpreted, full of fire and force, is the noblest attainment within the reach of man.

October 27 The ladder that Jacob saw was a vision but no less a reality. We may not see it, yet it is there; there when the mellow light falls like a soft benediction on the plains of Bethel; there when storms sweep and rage; for out of the tempest will come peace, and out of the darkness will come a great light.

Help us to realize in our daily life our luminous hours and to transmute our visions into conduct and character.

October 28 The divinity of a man is measured by the number, the strength and the character of his desires. The art of life is to complete life. One whose desires do not range into the vast and unexplored realms of thought and affection has not begun to develop in those respects most essential to the rounding out and perfecting of his nature.

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October 29 From the cradle all things combine to instruct us. The fortunes of circumstance, the pleasures and griefs, all the experiences of childhood and youth and manhood and old age — all are lessons which we learn. We say of the problem over which the boy wrestles that its chief value is in the discipline of the mind. So we may say of these human experiences, that their chief value is not in anything inherent in the experiences themselves but in the culture and refinement of the soul.

October 30 The ideal that you have formed of Jesus is the central and controlling power of your spiritual life. That life will be strong and beautiful to the extent that you have strengthened and beautified your thought of Jesus.

October 31 It is a fatal mistake to conceive this waiting on the Lord as something for Sunday worship and private devotion alone. Rather is it a temper of soul and an openness of mind that one may take with him to every daily task of life. Thus at the same time that we are being worn to weariness from without we are being refreshed by spiritual power from within.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 1 God is here in his world, heaven is all about us. The ones you have known and loved, and who have passed from your earthly sight for a little time, do not inhabit the far spaces. They are here with you, though your eyes are holden that you can not see them. They have brought heaven nearer to you; the land of God is no longer far off.

November 2 Inspiration is the presence of God in man, expanding and illuminating his soul. Formerly inspiration was a thing of tongue or pen. Now it is the blazing glory of a soul, the moving of the Eternal Spirit upon the deeps of man's inner life.

Out of the infinite deep of the unseen realms may we bring forth inspirations that shall glow with life and light and beauty.

November 3 If God is our Father and if he loves us and forgives us our sins, it follows, as the days follow each on each, that he must have provided for the continuance of this life of love. The Father will not cast away that which he has created and cared for so tenderly. To hold to the fatherhood of God is to believe in immortality, and really and deeply to believe in the perpetuity of our personal selves is to make the individual life strong, to dignify it and to ennoble it.

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November 4 Long-suffering is that power of spirit by which you are able, in spite of loneliness and pain, to hold to the highest ideal of life known to you. Is there no joy in your life today, or more tragic still, no hope shaping itself in some form of beauty out of the tomorrow? Be patient. Have the long-suffering of Christ. Learn to love God's world and God's people, and, believe me, your own must come to you at last.

November 5 We pray Thee that Thou wilt walk by our side that in suffering we may progress and in sorrow we may learn sympathy.

Give us a time of sunshine after the storm has spent itself upon our lives.

November 6 We live within the circles of two realms, that of the seen and that of the unseen. There is a world known to the five senses, a world the substance of which we can handle and the harmonies of which we can hear. But there is another realm, that known to faith and hope and love, a realm of God and immortality, a realm of sweet affections and profound thoughts and holy imaginations. The body by the exercise of mind knows the world of matter; the soul by the exercise of faith knows the world of spirit. One is quite as real as the other.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 7 Do not regard God's commandments as lashes to drive, but as silken ropes stretched before you in the darkness that you may feel your way out into the light.

Make us sensitive to Thy guiding touch and responsive to Thy holy will.

November 8 Standing as we are in the midst of the battle of our everyday, commonplace life, hearing as we do the angry roar of contest, we yet understand but little of the complex movements of this modern world. Its questions we can not answer, its problems we can not solve, its mysteries we can not hope to fathom. But the thing that should give us courage and inspiration is the confidence that behind all the conflicts of this civilization that admittedly we can not understand, stands God, who in the midst of the battle is executing his purposes.

November 9 Have you thought carefully of the meaning of that word conscience? Con-science; *con* — together, *scire* — to know. God and man knowing something between themselves — that is conscience; and it is the thing that makes the infinite difference between the brute creation and the human family.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 10 The new spirit of the age counts a heart throb as of infinitely more worth than the most sacred precedent or tradition.

Religion is friendship. The divinest religion is that which exemplifies the divinest friendship.

November 11 The chief reason why men and women grow weary of any work is because the growth lies almost wholly out of sight. There is progress but we fail to see it, and without the inspiration that comes from actual observation we soon grow weary and are in danger of halting by the way. That which can be seen, that which is physically tangible — in that we have full confidence. But if both process and result are hidden from sight we find it hard to believe in reality. He who would build a house watches it rise slowly, as stone is laid upon stone; but he who would build character finds within him a tendency to become weary in the work, since every beautiful outline is hidden from the appreciation of sense.

November 12 Above most other things it is wise to cultivate the powers of appreciation. The greater the number of stops in an organ the greater its possibilities as an instrument of music.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 13 Your idea of a thing will always determine your relation to it. Your idea of a man, his ability, his character, will influence your bearing toward him. Your idea of the Bible will fix the measure of its influence on your life. Your idea of the Christ will determine to a great extent his relation to your life.

November 14 Two things remain forever great, man and God — all else sweeps by and on. The eternal reality is the heart of man beating its way outward in aspiration and appreciation through the infinite sphere of life and love which is God.

There is something in every man that responds to that which is divine.

November 15 The patience that clothes a soul in the garb of humility, the fortitude that comes only through self-sacrifice, the tender love that springs out of the mysterious deeps of sorrow, the nobleness and righteousness of disposition that is far removed from merely superficial happiness — all this, by a law deep as the sounding-line of God, comes only to him who faces, as a soldier faces the battle fire, these soul-stirring and heroic words of Jesus, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross."

Guides to the Higher Life

November 16 If your life is dull and commonplace it is because your vision is directed toward the earth and your soul is centered on its interests.

Do Thou lift us up until we feel within us the very strength of divinity and our faces shine with the light of heaven.

November 17 We are trifling with men when we preach a scheme of reconciliation between the soul and God that will not serve between the soul and itself. Of what use to assure a man that God will overlook what his own awakened sense of honor will not permit him to overlook? Could we worship a God who would relieve a man of just punishment for wrongs that no power, human or divine, can undo? When once a man comes to himself, when his conscience is sensitive and his moral nature is aflame, then he stands forth under a new sense of his relation to the influences that he has set adrift in the world, then he scorns a salvation that is nothing more than a cheap escape from what he himself has wrought.

November 18 Man is a spirit and the natural object of his love must be that which is spiritual. We came from God and we are going back to God. If the love of the Father is not in us then have we not come to ourselves. We have mistaken the show for the reality, the creature for the creator.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 19 Religion is not a striving to separate oneself from the world; rather is it the supreme effort to stay in the world, to use the world to the high aims of spirituality and character.

November 20 We pray that into every home during this joyous season Thy peace may enter. Unto those who are shut in by circumstances of sickness, be Thou a comforter. Teach them that he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Teach them that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. May the worn and sorrowful understand that no hardship or affliction shall be able to separate them from the love of Christ — neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword. In all things it is possible for us to be more than conquerors through him that loved us.

November 21 The great truth that our God is creator and ruler is the norm of all healthful religious thought; it is the key that unlocks every mystery of creation. The spiritual birth of a people dates from the time of their awakening to this great fact of God's creation and ownership of the world.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 22 All lights are from the sun, however much they may seem to differ, and all loves are from God, various and distinct as they may appear. All our conscious relationships are human, and in humanity at its best we must find God. We do not come to men by way of God, we come to God by way of man. The commandment of the old law began, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." "This is my commandment," said Jesus, "that ye love one another."

November 23 Benevolence tends to enlarge a man's personality.

Teach us that the one thing we shall never repent of is a merciful deed.

November 24 When it fully dawns upon us that this is God's world and that he made it, we shall begin to understand that everything is holy and is to be so used by us. Our thanksgiving will be enlarged and will include within itself all the various manifestations of Providence. We shall not come to our worship with an endeavor to seek out those religious dispensations for which we should devoutly give thanks, but we shall see that there is a religious value in everything and that every event has its religious significance.

Guides to the Higher Life

November 25 It is not the toil of life, not its suffering, not its sorrow — it is none of these things that make up its tragedy. The tragedy of life is that men should bear its burdens without ever entering into the sacred sweetness of its rest.

Weariness is not fundamentally a physical inability; it arises out of the soul. All true poets have seen that he who would rest in deepest reality must find the unsounded depths of spiritual refreshment.

November 26 Take us quite within the enclosure of Thy holy place, and guarded by its hallowed defenses, may our spirits be soothed in peace, even the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Give us not the rest that comes after the storm but the rest that is peace at the heart of the storm.

November 27 The creed of the twentieth century will be theological; it will emphasize the fatherhood of God: it will also be sociological; it will emphasize the brotherhood of man. These will be the two poles of thought, holding in a divine unity the sphere of Christian truth.

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November 28 Never does man begin to develop on the divine, the God side of him, until from looking about him in the world he begins to look up. We set a balcony window in a dwelling-house in order that we may look out over the world and see the landscape beyond; but we place it there also in order that when the mantle of darkness falls over the landscape we may look up through the clear night and see the stars.

November 29 In the measure that we get the practical things of life in relation with the ideal, in that measure shall we gain dignity and power.

It is better to have a high ideal and forever fail to reach it than to have a low ideal and achieve it to your satisfaction.

November 30 All the great forces of the earth that minister to the good of man, wrongly used minister to his destruction. Electricity flashes some greeting to a distant friend, but wrongly used it is a power that destroys life. The experience of suffering may be entered upon in such a way as to lead to bitterness of soul rather than to perfection of character. Whether suffering proves a blessing or a curse to a man depends on the way in which it is used.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 1 We can not keep back the winter; it will come. The landscape must be covered with snow, the mountains must be robed in ice. But we can build a fire on the hearth; we can light the lamps in the darkness of the evening, and there in the home we may counteract the influence of the cold. Sin and suffering are here in the world; we do not know why; we try to avoid them but somehow we can not. What then shall we do? Simply this, light the fires within and light the lamps within. We can open the channels of our nature and let the life of God flow through in such great floods that we shall be lifted out of the realm of misery, the realm of objectivity, into the subjective life of love.

December 2 May we look forward with confidence and hope in the future because we have confidence and hope in Thee.

Under the dominance of our Christ may we go rejoicing in the better way.

December 3 Life is crowded full of opportunities, once missed, lost to us forever. Life is crowded full of transgressions — thoughts and words and deeds — that, once committed, no depth of bitter remorse can ever recall.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 4 If you came and asked me how you might know God, I should answer, Learn to know man. If you asked, How may I learn to love God? I could give you no other answer than that given by the Apostle John, Learn to love one another. Be faithful unto the little that is your priceless treasure, and as sure as God exists that love will fulfil itself.

December 5 Do you believe in God? That is your creed. Do you reverence God? That is your worship. Do you obey God? That is your life.

December 6 Life is full of a beauty that does not perish. That beauty lies about us as does the atmosphere; it speaks to us of heaven and the God who dwells therein and of his Christ. The beauty of earth passes and is gone; rather it is we who pass, but from the glory of the seen to that of the unseen. The world does not look the same to us as it did in our youth. The charm that drew us to the delights of sense passes away as we come to maturity of years. But if we are living our lives as we should live them we are passing into the rapture of that which is deeper and of which neither time nor chance can rob us. The old delights are gone; nothing can bring them back. Nor would we have it otherwise. At any given period of our earthly pilgrimage that which remains is far greater than that which we have lost.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 7 We become sure of God not by far away speculations of the intellect, but by employing on the common, everyday facts of our inner life all of faith and spiritual power that has been given us.

Have no fear of the scepticism that is a denial of doctrines; fear only the scepticism that is a denial of spiritual realities.

December 8 Man instinctively feels that there is something wrong with him, that his powers have not found their harmonious adjustment. The more the new science studies man, the more plainly it is seen that his will is not of itself in harmony with the will of God. Until man's life is changed, until the current of his desires is turned into new channels, the higher righteousness is impossible to him. The soul that follows its native inclination will never find the sweet way of peace; it will continue in the bondage of restlessness and fear and in consciousness of guilt.

December 9 Faith in God is at the foundation of all true culture of the soul, because without the power of God there can be no spiritual development and without the faith in God there can not be the realizing of his power.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 10 The fact that a man can sin proves something. The heights are equal to the depths. It is as far from the valley to the mountain peak as from the mountain peak to the valley. Better be a man and sin than a beast incapable of sinning. By so much as a man has degraded himself is it possible for him to be exalted. As one catches a vision of grandeur from the contemplation of an unfinished statue, so may he detect in an immature humanity the vision of the new brotherhood of the kingdom.

December 11 God is light to the eye, showing the beauty of nature; light to the mind, showing the beauty of truth; light to the soul, showing the infinite and unspeakable beauty of love.

Give us only so much of Thy truth as we have love to sanctify; give us so much of Thy love as we have truth to direct. Thus may we be guided into the full Christliness of life.

December 12 To be behind the times is the fate of most of us; to be abreast of the times, the good fortune of a few; to be in advance of the times, the lone distinction of the prophet.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 13 The one awful responsibility of life is that which springs out of the necessity that a man shall exercise his God-given power of choosing between the way that is right and the way that is wrong. Yet there is nothing so designed to sober and steady a man as the knowledge that the issues of life and death hang upon the various fortunes of his choice.

December 14 Progress in society means the breaking down of barriers that separate man from man; progress in religion means the breaking down of barriers that separate man from God.

No man ever yet went from the realm of materialism to the realm of idealism, from the realm of lower impulse to the region of higher motive, without awakening to a revelation of sonship with God.

December 15 God's purpose is to set up a kingdom of righteousness in the world; man is to work under the inspiration of God and not for price or reward. The end of civilization is not material splendor but spiritual glory. The kingdom of heaven is to be set up in the earth. The Christian man is one who has heard Christ's voice calling him to this great task and in the face of all obstacles has obeyed that voice.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 16 Every individual has a certain capacity for God. That is to say, every individual has a certain capacity for receiving the divine and spiritual life which we call God, but this capacity must be resolved into character. A man by nature is much like a sponge. The sponge is dry and hard and shrunken, but put it into the water, let the tides and currents flow through it, watch the process and see it expand. Man is hard and dry and barren and shrunken in his nature, but let the tides of the spiritual forces of this world flow through his soul, then watch that soul develop and expand. This is the passing over from capacity to character; this is the end and aim of all human living.

December 17 The day may come when some spiritual spectroscopist will demonstrate the actual conscious existence and condition of souls beyond the line of time. That day has not yet arrived; meantime, the part of wisdom is to trust the highest intuitions of the soul and hold to the highest teachings of eternal life.

December 18 Separate us from the unworthiness of the past; consecrate us to stauncher purposes, to more of the Christ heroism; touch us with tenderness and give us hearts that are athirst for the spirit of the living God.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 19 Strange mystery of a watchful Providence — no man ever follows the guiding star of his life without its leading him in adoration to the feet of the Holy One.

December 20 We thank thee, O God, that at the approach of this Christmas time it is permitted us to enter into the world's joy. Grant that we may enter also into its sorrow. May the contrasts of life move upon us and stir within the soul the Christ compassion. If the gospel of Jesus has seemed to us only a system of thought, may we now behold it as God's pity for the world.

December 21 The reason why the old world joyousness, the joyousness of the New Testament, has gone out of our Christianity, is because the church has sacrificed the romance and poetry of the brooding sky, the burning zeal to penetrate the unknown, because she has sacrificed the star element in her religion to the barest, hardest, most practical and uninspiring utilitarianism. We shall never have a religion that will once again set men on fire until we get one containing the realities symbolized by the star. Our Christianity today is practical and ethical; it needs only to be lifted up to the heavens and bathed in the infinite splendor.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 22 Whatever critical explanation may be given the story of the star, its poetic and inspirational value is unchanged. The star symbolizes or interprets to us the mystery of the unknown; it is heaven's signal to earth; it is God's answer to the deathless passion of the human soul to know.

December 23 The star hanging above the manger of the infant Christ is significant of the religious life on its highest side. The Christian must dare the things of mystery. He must not fear the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night. His search for a living God he must never relinquish. He must ever greet the unknown with a cheer. When men charge him with mysticism and call him visionary, when they tempt him to fall back upon the known and cease trying to penetrate the unknown, he must turn from them to the vision of the star. What it means he can not define, where it will lead he can not know. The Christ passion for spiritual adventure has burned into his soul, and he must go on and on — straight on and on to the end.

December 24 Once again may the sweet voice of angels be heard, once again may the guiding star lead to the Christ, once again may the deep, sweet reality of Christmas fill every heart.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 25 REMEMBREST THOU?

Remembrest thou, Balthasar, that first night
Whereon the star appeared? How we spake long
Of the high hope that stirred the world's sad heart?
How felt our spirits moved by some vast tide
That downward swelled through all the tangled
sky?

Remembrest how with pulses beating fear,
And trust, and yearning passion — holding each
To each — we turned our quivering faces up
And saw the star, and knew that God was near?
All hopes fulfilled, all dreams interpreted!
Remembrest thou that night of rapturous joy,
The silence and the peace, till we arose
Drenched in the morning dew, and that white light
That poured from new filled fountains in the soul?
Remembrest thou that birthnight of our Christ?

So wilt thou continue, our Father, to lead us by the guiding of the Christ love. May our star be the face of the Holy One, full of strength, yet touched into grace and spiritual beauty by the infinite pity that transfigures it. May we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. May his strength be our strength in every duty; his joy be our joy in every experience; his victory be our victory in every hour of trial. Make us aware that he came to answer our questions, to solve our perplexities, to fathom for us our mysteries; that he came to save us from our sins into thy holiness; out of our restlessness into thy peace.

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December 26 Christianity makes its highest appeal to the imagination. The current of its power runs down into the smallest details of life, but it flows out also into the far things of mystery. It is the manger wherein the ox feeds; it is the star that hangs luminous in the depth of night. It thrusts into one's hand the homely task of the morning; it lays over the imagination the spell of an infinite splendor. It is the stern voice of duty echoing from the earth; it is a song that gathers its voiceless harmony out of the brooding silence of the night. It is the long, hard way to climb, the heat and burden of the day, the stone for a pillow at night; but in the dreams that come stealing out of the mysterious depths of inner consciousness are visions of strange import, the golden ladders on which radiant forms of thought and love come and go between earth and heaven.

December 27 May Thy angels pitch their tents about us and keep with us the midnight watch.

Set some star in the firmament of our lives to guide us onward.

December 28 Every worthy ambition is leading us onward, every yearning desire is a pledge of our divinity, every achievement is the call of the living God to go up higher.

Guides to the Higher Life

December 29 Time is given us — time in which to repair all things, time in which to gather up the fragments of our life and out of them to make a perfect whole.

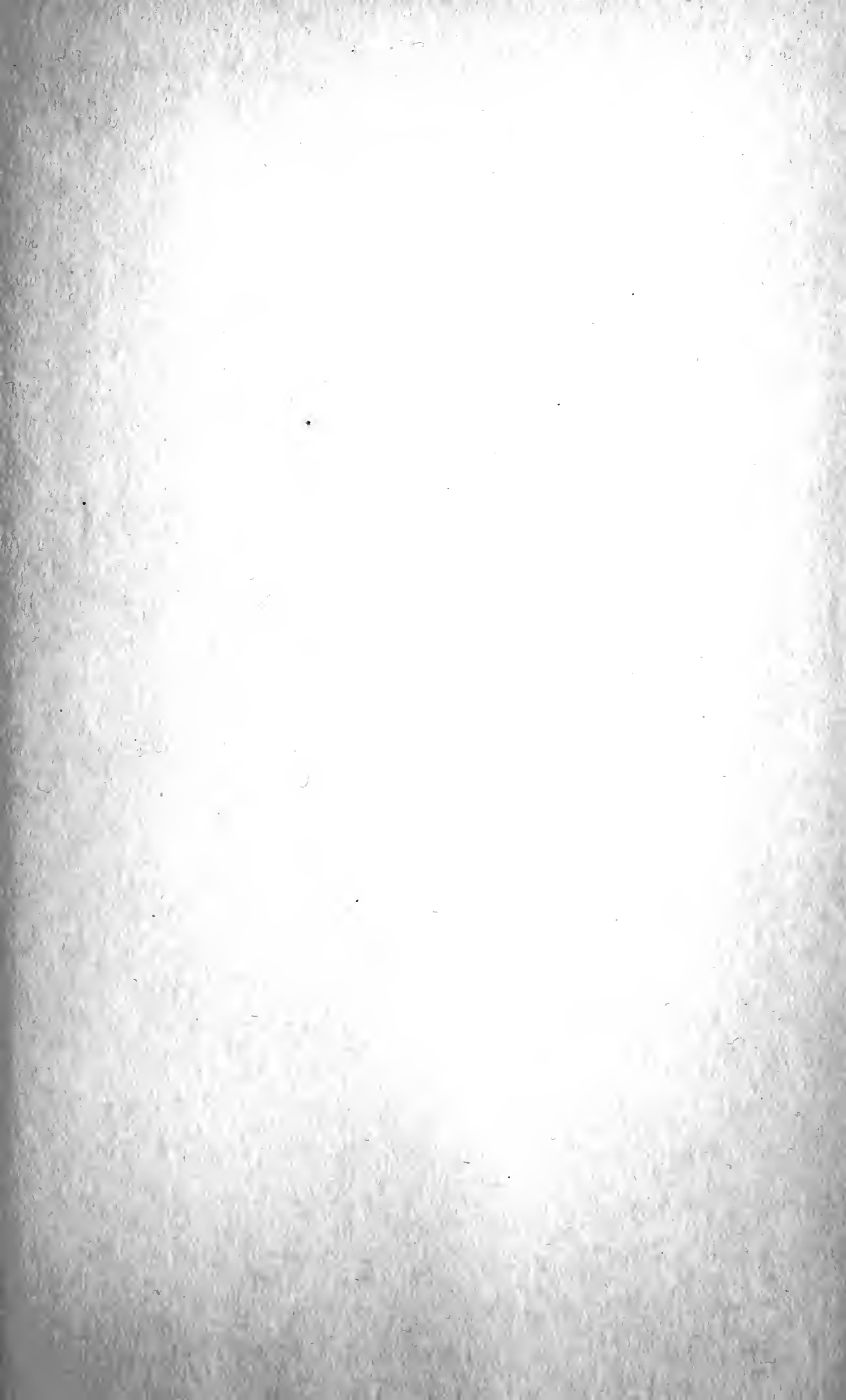
December 30 All the past has lived for us; shall we not live for the future? And can we better live for the future than by living in the present, by meeting the present obligation, by being faithful to the present ideal as it is presented to us? If you imagine that living for the future means living for some far away heaven, you are wrong. The true living for the future is the living for the life opening out to us in this world. If we fail for time we fail for eternity.

December 31 For the most part life lies before us. Much that has been thus far is matter for regret. But if yesterday has escaped us tomorrow is yet our own. It is our task to rouse ourselves, to struggle against the sin which doth so easily beset us, to take up the obligations of duty, to grapple with the tomorrow as though it were the beginning of a new life, to undertake with fresh earnestness the work of Christian living, to seek to purify our thoughts and consecrate our deeds, to make out of that which remains something truly divine.

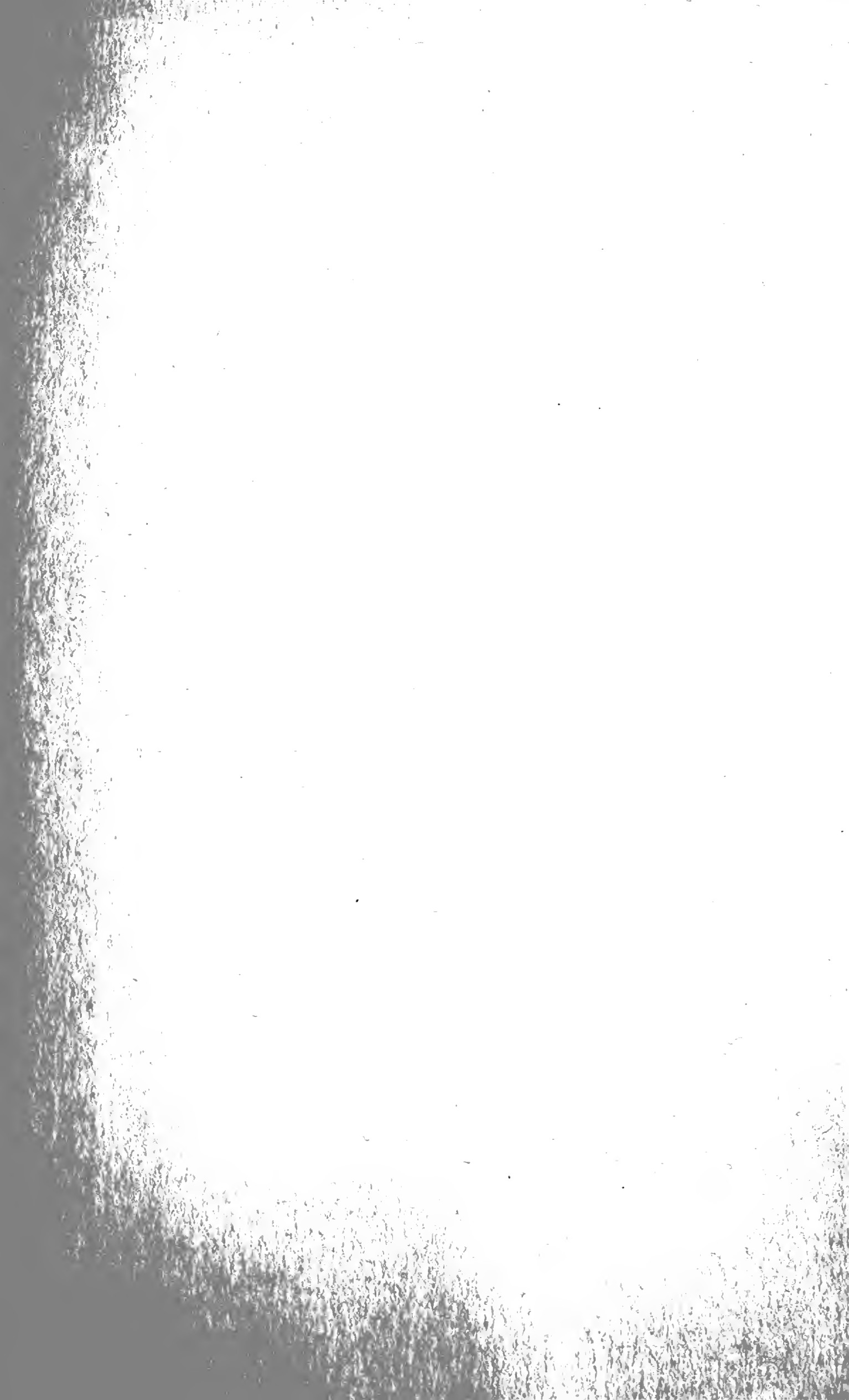
O Faith that all the year hath led
Our pilgrim feet unto this hour,
Unite our hearts in these last words,
And seal them with thy saving power.

O Love that sweetens every pain,
That hallows every cross we bear,
Teach us who go our various ways,
That thou, O Love, art everywhere.

O Lord who quickeneth our faith,
Who bringeth hope to every heart,
Thou God of love, hear this our prayer,
And richly bless us as we part.







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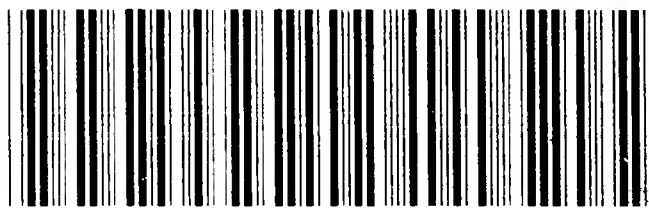
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