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★ HERE AND THERE A LEAF ★

LOUISE HEYWOOD REYNOLDS



W. G. Johnston .

29 July 1915.



Rev. J. K.

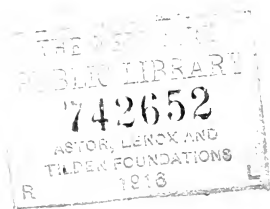
HERE AND THERE A LEAF.

BY

LOUISE HEYWOOD REYNOLDS.

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Take No Thought for To-morrow.

WE know not one moment of the future. We may be sitting quietly in our homes, and a flash of lightning, or the sudden development of a hidden disease, send us without warning into eternity. An accident on a railroad train, or an ocean steamer, a misstep, a fire at the dead of night, a hundred calamities which are every day sending others suddenly to their final home, are as likely to happen to us as to them.

To-day we may have all our loved ones about us, to-morrow they may leave us never to return. To-day we may be rich—to-morrow poor. To-day we may be in the exuberance of health and strength, and to-morrow be laid upon a bed of pain and weakness. To-day we

may be strong in the use of all our reasoning faculties, an asylum may be our home to-morrow. Under the care of our Heavenly Father, and thus helpless as regards our future, why need we take *anxious* thought concerning it?

Whatever we can do to make our lives successful in all things honorable, we are to do. We cannot sit down in idleness and expect that God will take care of us without any effort on our part. He has given us all our faculties, and all our energies, and we are accountable for the manner in which we use all His gifts ; but we cannot use them independently of Him. We must have His approval, and His blessing, and after we have done our utmost, leave the result of our efforts quietly and patiently with Him.

There is much happiness for us if we will only take it day by day, as God means we should, and not get so bewildered in the fogs and mists of life as not to see the beautiful sun-

shine beaming all along our path. Trials and disappointments must come, but the more patient we are, the lighter these will be ; and the longer we live, the more will they seem like the insect which lights upon us, and which we brush aside—an insignificant and but momentary annoyance.

Life is short. Why not, then, make the best possible use of it to-day? When shall we be content? When, if not now, live truly and earnestly, trusting God implicitly, and holding sweet and restful communion with Him?

Much that might be sweet and helpful in our lives is overlooked, because we are constantly anticipating some fancied greater blessing than we now possess, and in our anxious care for the morrow, we fail to enjoy the blessings of to-day. In this manner all our days are full of unrest, and we spend our whole life anticipating, but not realizing ; for, as soon as we have reached a desired point, we see beyond us still

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something to reach after, which we believe to be necessary to our comfort or happiness. The truth is that if we have not the spirit of contentment to-day, we are never likely to have it. If we do not exhaust the resources of to-day, but pass them by unused, we are likely to do the same to-morrow, thus making all our days barren of joy and of the satisfaction which comes from the assurance in our hearts that we have made the most of the day's gifts to us.

The feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction which takes possession of so many persons, whatever their circumstances and surroundings, and follows them all through life, is something startling. Now and then we find one who is comparatively at rest, but the majority, even, of those who profess to trust God implicitly, are restless and dissatisfied.

What is the reason for this contradictory condition? Many Christians have a sort of in-

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definite belief that God is their Father, and that He loves them, and will take care of them in a general way. That He has a special and daily supervision of their lives does not enter into their thoughts, even when they pray "Give us this day our daily bread." With this indistinct idea of God's relation to them, and their relation to Him, their faith is weak and wavering, and as no one can be satisfied with anything short of complete faith in a personal Saviour, they are not satisfied, neither do they appropriate to themselves the promised daily grace for daily needs. The promises of the Bible are not only for nations, but for the individual. God does not mock us in reaching out His hand to lead us; neither does He stand ready to give us an occasional lift over difficult places, but hourly is His loving and helping hand extended, and if we would only grasp it and never let go, how many mistakes we might avoid. He is our God to-day. All

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that we need for to-day comes from His bountiful hand, according to the measure of our faith.

Perfect faith in God would so transform our lives that we should hardly know ourselves. To feel each morning that we are held in the hollow of His hand who controls the silver and gold, the food and the raiment, the good and the evil, to realize that God goes behind us to correct our mistakes, that He is all about us, that nothing can touch us without His permission, and that He permits nothing which is not for our highest good, would bring a peace into our hearts—a radiance into our faces which could not be mistaken. Every day would bring its own compensations, its own completeness, and we would not need to anticipate or look forward.

How can any one doubt that God means us to live in this way, taking no *anxious* thought for the morrow, appreciating and making the

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most of the blessings of to-day^{*}, and enduring its annoyances with sweet submission to His will, who knows how much trial we need, who is moulding us daily into the image of His Son. How happy are we if we can say sincerely every morning, "O, Lord, I am Thine to-day ; use me as Thou wilt, and make my will in perfect harmony with Thy will, that Jesus may be glorified in me to-day !"

What have we to do with the morrow. The present moment is all that we can with certainty call our own. If we do not grasp this moment and use it, it is ours no longer. It will never come back to us. And how wise is the arrangement, take no thought for the future, in order that we may give our whole thought and effort to the present, that we may extract all the good, all the strength, all the power from to-day, and pass it by a well-used day, with no desire to recall it. One day at a time is all we can master. Coleridge says that in to-day al-

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ready walks to-morrow. But that is man's perversion. God has separated to-day from to-morrow by the darkness of the night, that we may not be overtaxed. He has made circles of the days and nights, each one complete, and round and full; one half for work and happiness, the other half for repose. He holds us in the hollow of His hand from morning until night, and from night until morning, and all we have to take thought about is the work He gives us to do, and the blessings He gives us to enjoy. If we do well each day's work, the future will be well provided for. He takes care of that, and our eternal future He provides for at the beginning. "Seek first the kingdom of God." Then how secure we are. How completely we can rest in Him as we perform our tasks. How full we can fill the moments with love and its outgrowth. How patient we can be under necessary ills. What a warm light we may shed all through our

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homes, in society, in business circles, everywhere.

It is true that much of the work of the present must have reference to the future. The farmer must prepare the ground and sow the seed ; but while sowing the seed he need not take upon himself the burden of the harvest.

There are a thousand possibilities thrusting themselves in the face of all to give them anxious care for the future. Sow the seed and trust. Do the day's work, whether it be for present need or for the winter of life, in hope.

Our blessed Lord knew what was in man ; that he would take upon himself burdens hard to bear, and which would imperil his true manhood. He knew the race for all time, and that in the determination to lay up treasures on earth, men would become more and more absorbed in the present, or become possessed by the evil spirit of accumulation. He knew the greed, the selfishness, the littleness of men, if

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left to themselves, and to put a check upon them, and to reveal a better way, He said, "Take no thought for the morrow."

And how thankful we should be that we have only to-day's work to do, its trials to endure. Thankful, too, that we may have all the pleasant things of to-day, all the joys, all the love, the companionship, the tenderness and sympathy at our command, knowing that to-morrow will bring its own good as well as evil.

How many, as if not satisfied with the real troubles of the present, anticipate future trials. How senseless, when the future is as blank to us as possible, and things rarely happen just as we expect. It is of little use, also, to make plans far into the future, for we are always governed by circumstances, and these we cannot anticipate.

We wear ourselves out fretting about the future. We lose to-day's joys in looking for the future greater joy. We throw away good op-

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portunities in looking for better ones. We withhold from our best friends the small roses it is in our power to give, in the hope some day of scattering roses everywhere. We withhold the dollar from charity, looking forward to the time when we shall be able to give a hundred instead. We fail to enjoy our small houses and modest comforts, in thinking of future mansions. We make to-day something to be endured and gotten through with somehow, while all the really good things are in the future.

Oh, cast out from your life this haunting phantom of to-morrow. It is unworthy of you to let it follow you so closely, making your life a troubled, perhaps a wretched, anxious existence.

There are pearls dropping all about you to-day. Will you trample them underfoot while looking for diamonds? There are fragrant lilies and roses blooming for you now. Will

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you pass them by unheeded, while seeking for rarer flowers which bloom not oftener than once in a century? Be not so unwise. Live in to-day. Enjoy present good. You will thus find a satisfaction in living,—thus be able to make wise use of your powers,—thus with your present resources be able to fill up the day to completeness. Your life will become tranquil. The sharp and anxious lines disappear from your face. Your nerves will be stronger, and restfulness will mark all your movements. You will be less avaricious. And you will be brave; for who cannot be brave for to-day? And fearless; who cannot trust God for to-day? And loving; who cannot be magnanimous for one day? And tender; who cannot be tender to the little ones, to the weak ones, to the less favored ones for one day? And pure; who cannot be washed in the morning at the fountain, and be pure all the day?

Oh, glorious life to live—this leaving all the

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unknown future with God whose it is, and living one day at a time, doing the work given us to do cheerfully and well, even though it be of the humblest, and always trusting God. What more do we actually need than daily bread? And if we do each day our duty to God, to our fellow-men, and to ourselves, what better preparation can we ever make for the long to-morrow of the soul, which in heaven will be as one eternal to-day?

To-morrow is like the rainbow which, in our childhood, we thought we could touch by simply running a short distance, but which, to our dismay, we found to recede as rapidly as we advanced; or like the horizon, which we imagined our steps could easily reach, and we be able to touch the sunset glory gilding it. To-morrow we never see. To-day we hold in a strong grasp. Use it ere it pass away. Time whirls rapidly on. All the to-morrows will be to-days, then yesterdays, and

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pass quickly far away into the past till centuries hide them from all the living. Time is for us to use. If we waste it, anticipating future good or future ill, we lose to-day and all the days as they go on, till our last day will find us barren and unlovely.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Sufficient also unto the day is the good thereof, if we will only open our eyes to see it. How many of us go through this world as blind as bats, and call it a vale of tears! There is reason for tears, surely; but there is reason also for rejoicing. Open your eyes to each day's opportunities. Think not of what will come to you in the future, but what is yours now. Think not of what you will do in the future, but what you can do now. Think of your present blessings. Thank God for them, and appreciate them the more. They are daily bread. Does it rain to-day? Is it dark and gloomy? That is all right; there

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must be some stormy days. To-morrow the cloud will have a silver lining or disappear entirely. Does the sun shine to-day? Enjoy the sunshine. To-morrow may be bright also, or you may pass into greater brightness.

Are you well? Enjoy your health and use it to the best advantage. Are you ill? Then to-day is a day in which to be patient and endure cheerfully. Are you free from trouble? Then it is a thanksgiving-day. Are you carrying heavy burdens for yourself or others? Then it is a day for special looking to God, and the rolling off of your burdens at the foot of the cross. Whatever the day brings to you, God comes with all its gifts in the person of His Son and in the office of the Holy Spirit. In the presence of Jesus the darkest day will be illuminated. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all the daily toil and trouble will be sanctified; and using each day well, improving every moment to some good end, how rich

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we may become as the days go on, and what fruit we may bear to the glory and honor of our Heavenly Father, who fills the measure of our days to completeness so that we need not trespass upon to-morrow.

God wishes us to feed on daily bread, with no questioning as to whether to-morrow's food will be more or less palatable than that which we have to-day. To-day's blessings are ours; the rest are God's, to give or to withhold as seemeth good in His sight. To-day's waiting and loss are ours, and we are to wait patiently and to lose bravely. To-morrow's trials may be quite unlike those of to-day, and there are some days which are all joy. Who cannot be patient and cheerful for one day? Who cannot rest so firmly on the Rock, our true foundation, for one day, as not to be moved, whatever may happen to vex or annoy? It is only one by one, day by day. Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread.

Bearing the Cross.

WHO can imagine for one moment what our Lord endured for us? The cross He bore on Calvary was not His only cross. No doubt many crosses pressed heavily upon Him even from His childhood.

He was unlike other children. Their rough and uncultivated ways must have caused His gentle and sensitive nature to shrink within itself. Their inclination for wrong-doing must have given Him pain, and His gentle remonstrances and disapproval of their acts were, no doubt, often misconstrued.

One of His life-long trials must have been the constant realization that He was alone. Who could understand Him? Who could sympathize with Him? Upon whose tender human

heart could He lay His weary head and rest? His position was singular. Never since the world began had any one stood in His place, suspended, as it were, between heaven and earth, between ages past and ages to come, neither wholly human, nor yet wholly divine, the incarnate Son of God, lifted up before the gaze of all humanity, first by symbols, then in His own body, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Singular, indeed, was the heavy cross He bore, upon which was laid the sins of all the ages, from the creation of the world to the end of time. No doubt the wooden cross which was placed upon Him, and to which He was nailed at the last, was a symbol of all that He had borne and suffered, from the moment when He fully realized His position and His mission until that time; and His agony at Gethsemane, and His torture upon the cross but feeble expressions of what He really suffered for our re-

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demption. It is not strange that in intense agony He prayed that the cup might pass. None of us can ever know the mystery of that bitter cup. We can only in part divine it, and approach with holy reverence into the presence of the Supreme suffering which called forth such a prayer from the Patient One, the Divine One, the Son of God, and hear with holy reverence His expressions of deepest humility and sweetest submission, notwithstanding the terrible ordeal—"Not my will, but Thine be done."

There are many hours in the life of every one of us when we feel that our cup is full to overflowing, that it is too bitter, that we cannot drink it. There are crosses fastened to our hearts with nails that pierce and lacerate, and we shrink from them and beg and plead to have them removed. But, as with Jesus, there are often reasons why the crosses should remain. God has a work to be done by them which nothing else could do, and they will be

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lightened or removed only when His purpose is accomplished. There are crosses, also, which are light and so easy to bear that we do not think of seeking the help of Jesus in bearing them, and they fret and irritate, and make us impatient and unlovely. There is no cross, be it light or heavy, which He will not illuminate for us, if we bear it in sweetness and humility, following Him.

It is not strange that we, too, shrink from bearing the cross, if we see only the earthly side of it, upon which is written in blood-red characters, "The Reproach of the World," "Separation from Friends," "Toil and Weariness," "Temptation and Sorrow." But if we keep in view the heavenward side, we may take courage, for there we find in letters of gold, "Peace unutterable," "Life everlasting," "A home in the Heart of Jesus."

"Do not choose thy crosses, but take those which God gives thee.

BEARING THE CROSS.

“ ‘In the gift of my cross beware of choosing, for I know better than thou what thou canst endure.

“ ‘Thou must not drag thy cross, but bear it. Thou must not blush because of it, but glory in it.

“ ‘When the burden of my holy cross terrifies thee, it is the want of love which renders it heavy.

“ ‘Thou must not bear the cross with ostentation, but simply upon the shoulder.

“ ‘Under the yoke of my cross bend thy will in bearing this burden with humility.’ ”

He is Coming.

JESUS comes not alone to call us home, but every day, with many messages of love and warning. He comes at an hour when we think not, knocking at the door of our homes, knocking at the door of our hearts, and because we are not ready, and do not hear Him, or, if we hear, are ashamed to admit Him, He, grieving, turns away to come next time in chastisement, and spares not whatever is needful for our highest good, that not one of His little ones may perish. How often He might come to us in anger. How often we weary His patience. How we love things which He hates, and from which He is trying to redeem us.

Could we quietly analyze ourselves from the standpoint from which He looks at us, each

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day would bring many humiliating proofs of the need of His coming with chastening hands, with loving, pierced hands, outstretched to save us.

He comes to us in physical suffering. There are days in the life of each one when every nerve and fibre thrills with pain; when the head throbs as if it would burst, and we find it difficult or utterly impossible to think of anything but our own intense suffering, and we can only hold still and brace ourselves to endure. Need we reproach ourselves if at such times we cannot pray, that we cannot even think clearly of God, that pain holds us in subjection with an iron hand. Ah, then, we can only lie in the arms of Divine Pity, as a sick child lies in its mother's arms, unconscious of the tender, yearning love surrounding and holding us. But as everything which comes from God brings with it some brightness from the throne itself, if in these hours of seclusion we can gain

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mastery enough over ourselves to realize that this, also, is God-given, we may see ourselves surrounded by a Divine brightness, even by Jesus Himself, who cannot remain afar off when His beloved ones suffer ; and this wonderful revelation will help us much towards sweetness and patience, and final victory over the pain itself. We need to say continually, " This is of God. This comes from Him. I *can* bear it, because it is His will."

Oh, if we could but see every day, in all the conditions of life, just how the Saviour comes to us ! How He wards off unseen dangers, and puts Himself beneath us to make for us a sure foundation, knowing far better than we can know, that it is only those things which are built upon the Rock which will endure. That any beauty or any strength built upon a less secure foundation must eventually prove a deformity or weakness. That however high and imposing the battlements of the human

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soul may be, they cannot withstand the shocks, the underminings of the terrible influences of the world, unless they are built upon the Rock Christ Jesus. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of Him in the cloud in which He is enveloped, but oftener in our sins and selfishness we do not know that He is in the disappointment, in the shadow, in the causes for worry and anxiety, which so often come to us; and because we worry or repine under His easy yoke, and are restless under His light burden, we lose the blessing of His sustaining and joy-giving presence.

How sadly He comes to us when He sees it necessary to take from us our dearly beloved ones. And yet how He pities us—how He takes us in His arms and hushes us, as a mother hushes a hurt child. And how often we grieve Him by our indifference, and when He finds us sleeping. “Could ye not watch with me one hour?”

He comes in the still small voice, warning

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us that the enemy is at hand, beseeching us to put on the whole armor of God, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

He comes in the thunder-peal of misfortune, to rescue us from laying up our treasures on earth, for who but He can know the full value of treasures laid up in heaven?

And He will come at an hour when we think not, to gather in the harvest. Shall we have nothing to offer Him then but tares?

And He will come at a time when we think not, to judge the living and the dead. Who of us will be able to abide that coming? Who of us but those who appear before Him in raiment white and shining, bearing on high a cross stained with His heart's blood? Who but the blood-bought throng will rejoice at that coming? To those who are redeemed it will be a

day of glory, and honor, and joy unspeakable. To those who are not redeemed, it will be a day of remorse and anguish unutterable.

There is no gainsaying this. If anything is true this is true. If there is any salvation for us, it is in our Lord Jesus Christ. And, oh, you who are not already washed in the blood of the Lamb, look to yourselves. There is no time to lose. This night your souls may be required of you.

“Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight; or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.”

“Be ye, therefore, ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

No Middle Way.

“**H**E that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”

Can anything be plainer than this from the lips of the Son of God?

There are two powers reigning on the earth, and one or the other must control us. We are either serving God or Satan. There is no more subtle snare that the prince of evil throws around his victims than that of the middle way. He is always trying to make them believe that between God's path and his path there is a broad highway in which they may walk at their ease, not troubling themselves as to whether they are right or wrong, so long as they have a choice of good things from the

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trees overhanging this highway, and from which they can pluck the sweetest fruits without discrimination as to whether they grow on the right hand or on the left.

There are multitudes of people who are thus led blindly on and know not who is leading them, and who would consider it an insult if you should even gently hint that they are not in the way of safety. The web thrown about them is delicate, its texture of pleasing colors, and they do not feel it tightening closer and closer around them. They are not conscious of danger. If you whisper to them of it they laugh at your fears, and go on gayly to a final hopeless awakening to their real position.

Many enjoy the pleasures of sin who do not acknowledge their master. They imagine they can break away from the service of God without entering any other service. They think they are free. Oh, how great is their mistake! We are never free till we are born into God's

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kingdom ; then, indeed, are we free-born, and no power can take away from us our birth-right.

Another snare which Satan lays for those whom he desires to possess, is to conceal himself behind superstition, and make them believe that he is only a myth, a fabulous creature invented to frighten simple-minded people.

It is true that we cannot see him, nor hear him, nor touch him, he being a spirit, but we have proof enough of his existence in the havoc he has made in the world, which without him would be to this day a paradise. He is a liar in very essence, and many are deceived by him, and led on step by step to destruction. For this reason God has drawn fixed and indelible lines between right and wrong. Do not try to obliterate them ; you cannot. There are no crooked paths of God's making ; none which lean just a little toward the wrong. Out of God's path, you are in Satan's path.

NO MIDDLE WAY.

There is no broad road nor even a footpath between them.

Those things which are of the most importance to us are by twos and not by threes. Good and evil, sin and holiness, life and death, God and Satan, heaven and hell. We have it in our power to choose one of these, but not to create a third. Either we are Christians or not Christians. Either we are the friends of God or His enemies. The paths in this world which lead on to the next are already marked out, and we are either in the road to sin or holiness. If we think we are in a path between the two, we deceive ourselves.

Some think it makes no difference in which path we walk—that a loving Creator will bring every one out right somehow at last. Do you think that the Son of God and King of Heaven would have left His throne to come to this world to take upon Himself the trial of

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being human, to endure a life of poverty, suffering and hard labor, and die a disgraceful death upon the cross if it made no difference? —if there be a middle way between right and wrong in which multitudes may safely walk?

There are few who will not admit that it is our highest duty and for our highest good to love and obey God; but many seem to think the teachings of the Bible, which is His revealed will to us, are meant for others than themselves. They are good enough now. They do not need a Saviour. If they do the best they know, God will not reject them. How can any one do the best he knows and still reject God's Word? And where in that Word does God suggest a compromise between good and evil? On the contrary, the contrasts between right and wrong, between the position of the righteous and the wicked, are in His Word everywhere strongly marked.

God has left no escape from the thunderings

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of His anger but through faith in His Son. This way He has provided for us. It is His way. We might have suggested some other, but our plans are as nothing before His plans. His law is perfect, His testimonies are sure. Who shall gainsay them? Who shall so blaspheme God as to say, "My way is better than Thy way?" Yet how many do this in deed if not in word; in thought if not in deed.

How can men call God severe for drawing lines so straight and even when they go astray so easily? How could He be a perfect Governor of the world and do otherwise?

"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy feet from evil."

And oh, young man or young woman, whoever you are, high or low, rich or poor, known or unknown, look the truth fearlessly in the

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face, and deal with things as they are, not with things as you would like to have them, and direct your life accordingly. Be not deceived by false appearances. We have to deal with real things; and life is not all beauty and poetry. Arm yourself for a fight with wrong and injustice and deceit. These things are in the world, and we have to meet them. The evil one is their originator. Meet them defiantly with God and truth on your side. Lean always toward God, and you will pass through life's ills unharmed. Lean only a little toward Satan, and you are in imminent danger. You must do one or the other of these, for there is no indifferent middle path.

The idea of being in the service of such a power as Satan is too repulsive for men to accept, and for this reason they do not realize nor acknowledge that they are in his service, neither will they take sides with God. But it is impossible to serve God a little, and serve

Satan a little. How vain to attempt it. Have the manliness, at least, to show your colors. If you have lived so long without being called upon to determine your position, find out at once where you stand. If you are not for God, you are for the evil one. Does it humiliate you to think of it? Do you say, "Impossible!" It is not only possible, but the living truth. Does it startle you? It may well startle you.

Perhaps you have never thought of it in this way before; and this is one proof, if you are not for Christ, that you are in the hands of your mortal enemy. He has lulled you to sleep, and left you in quiet purposely. Wake up! Rouse yourself to the utmost! He has breathed upon you his poisonous breath! Break away from him! Trust him and yourself no longer! Look to God! He alone is worthy your confidence and service. He alone can help you on to everlasting glory and honor.

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How can you take a black-hearted monster, the prince of devils, for your guide? Flee for your life to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Ashamed to come! He bids you come and wash in His blood and be made clean that you may follow Him in the path to glory. Will you come?

Oh, how blind you are if you persistently reject Him; if you grow to be old and still reject Him; if you call Him "Lord, Lord," and yet do not keep His sayings, but build your foundations upon the sand, to be thrown down in that day when nothing will stand which is not built upon the Rock of Ages.

Service is joy and life a grand victory if we are in the service of God. How absurd to try to free ourselves from Him. Helpless in His sight as little children are in our sight, wayward and rebellious toward Him as children are to us, how He must pity us. And O, how He must love us to bear patiently so long with our

indifference to Him and to His dear Son, still hoping to save us from eternal death. Then look to yourselves at once. Lose not a moment. Flee to Jesus Christ and let Him clothe you in His own righteousness.

Be not ashamed to put on that spotless robe, for if you are ashamed to confess Him before men, then, indeed, will He have reason to be ashamed of you, and to ignore you in that day when He cometh to judge the world. Trust God, and be quiet in His hands. In Him all strife ceases, all anxiety is banished. From His infinite knowledge He will teach you all you need to know in this world, and the rest. He will teach you in the upper kingdom.

It may be you shrink from entering the narrow path. The path of righteousness is narrow only in comparison with the broad, because the much-frequented path of sin. It is wide enough for all to walk therein who will. It lies through peaceful valleys, and beside

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still waters. The fruit of the land is sweet to the taste, and refreshing to all who eat of it. Jesus walks in the midst of it, and His banner of love overshadows all. It is in the broad path that everything unlovely is to be found.

It may be you are one of those who have already entered the narrow path, but are so far from your guide that you are frequently straying and losing the way, and so to you the path seems difficult. Keep close to Jesus, then your life will be in harmony with God's will, and what otherwise might annoy you or make you afraid, you will leave to Him whose wisdom is infinite, and who sees the end from the beginning, and so your path will grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day when you will see the King in His glory.

To be for God, to have His protecting, fatherly care, to have Omniscience and Omnipotence on your side, and Infinite Love, how glorious! When Omniscience and Omnipotence were em

NO MIDDLE WAY.

bodied in humanity that heaven might touch the earth and transfigure it, what glory and honor were bestowed upon us that we were counted worthy the sacrifice which elicited the wonder and admiration of all heaven, and which might well cause all heaven and earth to bow in adoration before Him, crying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Faith and Works.

WE are always asking something of our Heavenly Father, as though we were always hungry and in need, and think it strange that so much praying does not bring the desired answer to our prayers. Are not many of our petitions faithless? And is not God's answer to every prayer, "As your faith is, so be it unto you"?

No doubt there are prayers offered every day, by earnest Christians, the answers to which would make them dumb with astonishment. We pray too often into the air, and there is no warmth of love, no heart in such prayers. They reach no farther than the atmosphere in which the vibrations of sound lose themselves. They are not the prayers of faith.

FAITH AND WORKS.

We pray that God will take care of the poor, but do not help the answering of our prayer by our works. We pray, "Abide with me, O Lord"; but we do not believe, even while we are praying, that He will abide with us. We pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," but do not believe He will give it to us; for how we fret and worry over that same daily bread!

"Ask and it shall be given you," is true of everything which it is best for us to have. If God denies us anything it is in the same spirit in which we deny our children many things. And if our prayers are not always answered just as we wish, we need not think that they are unheard by God. The feeblest uplifting of the heart to Him is noticed and considered. Why not then pray in faith that God will answer unless there is a good reason why our request should be denied.

Do we not pray too much and praise too little? While we are admonished to pray without ceasing,

are we not also commanded to rejoice alway? Should not praying and rejoicing accompany each other? Should not praise precede or follow every prayer? And does it not often happen that our cup of blessing is so full that our prayers will turn to praise?

Why be always hungry, and poor, and naked, when if we are hungry, it is because we only taste the bread of life and then return to our common fare; if we are naked, it is because we will not put on the robes of righteousness offered to us by Jesus; if we are thirsty, it is because we only sip at the water of life instead of taking full draughts at the fountain. Why do we sit in our poverty crying, "Oh, Father, I am poor and needy, clothe and feed me; I am a poor, miserable sinner, save me; I am falling at every step, Oh, lead me"! And still the same cry day after day, turning a deaf ear to the answering of our Father: "I give thee bread, eat and hunger no more. I clothe thee, put on these

white robes. I pardon all thy sins, go and sin no more. Take my hand in thine, and thou shalt never more walk alone."

Why not take God at His word? He hears the prayer even before we utter it, and is more ready to give good gifts to us than we think. Under the shadow of His wings, there is rest and peace. We are not beggars at His gates, but heirs of His kingdom, and with light hearts and radiant faces we may go singing towards our home.

God blesses us wonderfully, even when our faith is like a grain of sand. What may He not do for us when we rely upon Him with the strong confidence of children. With such faith, good works almost without limit would naturally follow, and these good works would begin in our own hearts, and in our daily living, for thus and thus only would we be prepared to extend our works beyond ourselves. Faith and pure living are inseparable. True religion is undefiled. If

men who profess to be religious are not so, it is not that religion itself is wanting in any good element, but that they fall short of the standard raised on high that all may see it, even Jesus Christ.

How dare one call himself a Christian who is not Christ-like? How can he live in conformity to the world, and give his neighbors occasion to charge him with dishonorable conduct and little meannesses which a noble man of the world would scorn. A true Christian is God-like. A God-like man towers so far above his fellow-men that they cannot fail to acknowledge his superiority. Alas that there are so many who are Christians only in name. And that so many who might shine as stars even here, have only a smouldering faith beneath the embers of worldliness, whose light never shines forth, whose works are according to their dim faith, and who barely press into heaven through gates ajar, instead of entering triumphantly through gates open wide,

with loud hosannas greeting the blood-bought and glorified ones whose faith and works here have opened to them a glorious inheritance with the highest ones in heaven, at the right hand of Jesus.

The faith which every one ought to have is like the faith of little children in their parents. They lay their hands in ours with perfect confidence. A mother is all in all to her child. If the mother is near, all is well. If mother's hand can be touched in the light of day or in the darkness of night, the child is at rest. There is no questioning in the obedient child's mind when he is denied his requests.

My little boy often asks me for that which it is best he should not do or have, and I say, "No, darling," and his frequent reply is, "All right."

When we hold the hand of God in perfect love and confidence, all doubt and fear will be cast out, and whatever answer God may give to our requests, we can say with perfect resignation,

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“ It is, indeed, all right.” And the works which will accompany such faith will be holy living, and a constant giving of ourselves to others as Christ gave Himself to us, not in a sacrificial way as He did, but in a humanly divine way, from day to day, doing all the little things of life perfectly, graciously, gracefully, as He would do them ; for life is mostly made up of little things, and but few of us are called to do great things.

God will assign to us our daily tasks, and we need take no care or thought as to whether we might be doing something greater or better. It is what God wishes us to do, and that is enough. Be sure He will not fail to give us all we can do well, nor fail to place us just where He wishes us to be. And we are not to fret nor be discouraged if sometimes the place seem humble, or the work too hard. We have taken up the cross to follow Him whose lot was indeed humble, and whose task was arduous, and we must not shrink, but clasp the strong hand the tighter,

FAITH AND WORKS.

and lean more heavily upon the strong arm, and He will bring us through victorious.

The power of faith is beyond measure. If the members of one large church had the faith they might have, did the works they might do, what a revolution would that church make within the circle of its influence. And if the members of all the churches in the world were really Christ-like, would we need to wait long for the answer to our daily prayer, "Thy kingdom come" ?

Character has a wonderful influence upon men; indeed, it is the man himself; and no professional sham will be accepted for the genuine thing. Men feel it in their hearts when another is sincere, when he stands firm as a rock for right and truth, when he scorns everything unworthy the name he bears, and lives by faith; and they are right in judging of the quality of his faith by the work wrought in his character by that faith.

This living faith which is like a well of water

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springing up unto everlasting life is a most wonderful gift from God. He holds it ready for us in His exhaustless treasure-house. All we have to do is to open our hearts to receive it. And how gloriously it lifts us above the friction of every-day life. How it calms our souls till we rest perfectly in His arms like an infant in the arms of its mother. And how easy with such a faith become the works. And how naturally and without apparent effort do we serve God, and do and endure His will, thus fulfilling in ourselves the familiar words, "The just shall live by faith."

Not Believing because not Understanding.

THERE are those who do not believe the Bible because they do not understand it—who do not believe in God because He is veiled in mystery.

What do we understand? The smallest leaf that glistens in the sunshine and quivers in the breeze is incomprehensible to us. Were we to try millions of years, we could not make one. The blade of grass grows silently from the tiny seed, we know not how. Slowly, slowly the acorn sends forth a tree which defies wind and storm in its strength and majesty, and Ruskin looks at it with wonder to say, "What a thought it was when God thought of a tree!"

Look at the flowers, so varied in their beauty. Whence do they derive their color and fragrance?

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How is it possible that so much loveliness can be centered in a lily or a rose? How is it done? We are dumb before these thoughts of God expressed in the grass, flowers, trees, and in all living, growing things. And there are mightier things than these. Who understands the law by which we and all other objects on the face of the earth are kept from being thrown off into space in its rapid whirl on its own axis, as it majestically travels on its ceaseless journey round the sun? Look into the heavens on a clear winter night, and comprehend, if you can, what you behold. We do not even understand ourselves. Who can explain the union of the soul and body during life, and the separation of the same at death? Who can tell when and how the soul-life comes to us? And nothing can be more wonderful and mysterious than the reproduction of species throughout the animal and vegetable kingdom.

Thus we may go on from one thing to an-

NOT BELIEVING.

other until we are forced to cry out, "Alas, we know not anything!" and to feel that we are tossed upon an ocean of uncertainty and unrest without a rudder to direct our course, unless we look upon everything as the work of an infinite God of Love and Omniscience, who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand; who directs and disposes all things for our highest good; who has created all the beauty and loveliness of this world for our happiness, and without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground. Then, indeed, we can rest in Him and be satisfied, and not expect to understand all His wonderful works, nor to fully comprehend Him or His Word.

He has revealed Himself to us in His Word, in nature, and in the person of His Son so fully that we may love and honor Him, and delight to do His will, and be at peace with Him. And we may enjoy to the utmost all the beauty and endless mystery of nature in her richness and pro-

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fusion, recognizing in all the handiwork of Him in whose regard we are sinful, ignorant creatures, and yet His noblest work. Perfect manhood and perfect womanhood are glorious. "In the image of God created He them." And bearing about with us something divine, we may be kings and queens upon the earth; but only as we are obedient subjects of our Heavenly King, toward whom disloyalty is the highest treason, justly punishable by banishment from His presence forever.

What honor he bestows upon us in calling us His children, and in making us joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly inheritance; in holding us in His great arms of love to soothe our cares and sorrows, that we may be able to bear that which is inevitable on account of our own sinful natures and the sins of those with whom we come in contact. Were we as pure as nature, did we carry out the true purpose of life as does a blade of grass, what a heaven this earth would be!

But the curse of sin is upon us all, and the only way to struggle out of its chains, the only way to attain to pure womanhood and to pure manhood, is by the help of Jesus Christ.

He who gives to the flowers their perfume and color, to the sky its blue, to the clouds their splendor, to the forest-trees their varied shades of green and their brilliant autumnal hues, to the elements their power for good and ill, to the earthquake its terror, to the lightning its tongue of flame and its voice of thunder, can do infinitely greater things than these in cleansing our hearts in the blood of Jesus, and restoring us to His favor, and to a place in His kingdom. And can we refuse to believe and accept this most wonderful of all mysteries because we cannot understand it? Must we wait for a clear insight into the things of God before we believe in them? Can we make ourselves as gods to pry into that which is hidden from us? Is it not absurd to expect to know what God only knows? The

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finite cannot fathom the Infinite, and who can find out God?

God is love. This one attribute of love surrounds us, fills us, upholds us, encircles us so that nothing can touch us that does not come through this circle of His love. Nothing can annoy or vex us that He does not permit.

Milk for babes, and meat for strong men. We are His babes in this world, and all that we can grasp and use He has given to us, and it is neither an occasion for regret or for distrust that we cannot compass the universe with our understanding as He does. God is; we are. And what can feeble ones do but rest in the All-powerful? What can ignorant ones do but learn of the Omniscient?

We have all eternity before us in which to learn of God and His mighty works. Here we only master the alphabet; for this is a training-school, a small beginning; and unless we learn well the Alpha and Omega, and all that lies be-

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tween of the lesson God has given us to learn here, we cannot expect to understand the language of Heaven.

If we wish to become proficient in any branch of study, we do not begin with that part which is most difficult, and throw it aside in disgust, saying, "I will have nothing to do with it, for it is impossible to understand it"; but we begin with the rudiments, and advance slowly, step by step like a little child learning to walk, till all obstacles are surmounted, and what at first was incomprehensible, becomes easy and well understood. And if we sit at the feet of Jesus, willing to be taught the alphabet of the Word, willing to be in the lowest class till we are prepared to go up higher, much that seems dark and difficult now will be illuminated and made easy as we go on in loving obedience to the Divine will. And oh what a comfort it is to be certain that what we do not know Jesus knows, and wherein we fail, He, with tender, brotherly love,

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will intercede for us, and cover our defects with His own righteousness, and present us faultless before the throne of God to go no more out forever.

Settle it with Jesus.

THERE are many things we must settle with Jesus, and which no human being can adjust; trials we can tell to no one, and heart-aches we must hide even from our nearest friends. There are things which wound us, which oppress or injure us, which human nature would settle with the offenders—sarcasm for sarcasm, harsh word for harsh word, unkind deed for unkind deed, following the old interpretation of the law, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But we who belong to Christ have no right to return evil for evil, nor to make any attempt toward vengeance or retaliation. He will teach us how to meet wrong and injustice, and we ought not dare to meet them in any other way than that

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which He suggests to us by His life and precepts, or by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit within our hearts.

When our accustomed serenity is suddenly disturbed and we are nearly overpowered by the tumult within us, then should we go away alone and settle it with Jesus.

When we are unjustly blamed for some unpleasant occurrence, and we cannot make any one understand that we are not at fault, all we can do is to carry our trouble to Jesus.

When our pride is wounded by those who are our equals, or perhaps our inferiors, but who regard themselves our superiors, and we are angry with ourselves because we are found trailing our armor in the dust instead of wearing it, thus rendering ourselves liable to the thrusts of the enemy whose vigilance surpasses ours, we should go to Jesus at once and tell Him all about it.

When recognition is denied us, and we are set

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aside by those who are less intelligent or less refined than ourselves, who can understand our position better than He?

There are many times when our hearts are restless and turbulent, and we cannot assign any reason for it, when we realize that our blessings are many, and that we ought to be happy, but are not; then all we can do is to go to Jesus. He will search us and try us and find out the cause for all our restlessness, and apply the remedy in love and tenderness. "Search me, O Lord, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

There are many things about which there is a great difference of opinion, which we must settle with Him.

Shall we frequent the theatre?

Is it right for us to spend much time in idle amusements; in the mere formalities of society; in meeting the demands of those for whom we have no affection, and who have no real interest

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in us? Is it right to keep late hours, and to dance until we are very weary; to eat and drink that which slowly undermines our health and strength?

Should we look upon those less favored than ourselves with wealth or position as our inferiors, regardless of their real worth? Do we not prove our own inferiority by this very act? Ought we to speak ill of others unless circumstances require us to tell what we know to be true? Let Jesus answer all these questions. Human judgment is rarely free from prejudice. He only can decide impartially. He sees things through the bright light which surrounds the throne. His judgment is as clear as the light of heaven. He knows even the subtle influences which surround us. There is no dimness in His vision. There are no beams in His eyes, no doubts in His mind; and loving us supremely, He cannot but guide us for our good. He will answer all our questions in ways that cannot be mistaken,

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if we really desire to do His will. If we desire our own way, the answer is not always clear to us, for it is in some degree modified by our own preconceived opinions.

Blessed will be the time when we settle everything with Jesus; when we no longer trust to our own judgment; when we no longer cry out anxiously, "What shall I do?" Blessed indeed to have no more harassing care about the future, to be at rest in Him.

We have all experienced hours of peace which passeth all understanding, but to have this peace at all times, Jesus must be close at hand. To settle all our difficulties, He must abide with us, that quick as thought His presence may be felt, and His hand grasped, and His strength imparted. Thus only can we perform faithfully the common duties of life, moving quietly above their vexations, hiding from others our annoyances as the calmly flowing river hides the rough places of its stony and uneven bed.

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But many cry out, "My heart is sinful; my speech is wicked; my house is in disorder; I am not prepared to entertain a King."

If we shut Christ out with the plea, "I am unworthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof," then do we shut Him out forever, for we can never become worthy of His abiding presence by our own efforts. It is He who will make our hearts and homes pure and fit temples for the King of Glory. We should invite Him to come in, not because we are worthy of Him, but because He loves us, and He will come in. And we may know that He is with us in the same way in which we know our dearest friend is in the room. Though we are not looking at him, nor thinking of him, we are conscious of his presence. We need not think about Jesus to the exclusion of other things, but we may have the joy of His presence in the home, or wherever we may be; His helpful sympathy and imparted strength in our work and in our care, and His

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guidance in all our difficulties. Many think of Him as being at some remote corner of the universe, except on rare occasions when He condescends to draw nearer. He is just as near to every one of us as we desire. How blind must they be who admit Him not into close communion with themselves, and then complain that clouds obscure their vision; that they have not as much light as they wish; that God and heaven seem far away; that they are perplexed and troubled about many things.

We cannot follow a guide who is so far from us that we cannot see him, nor hear his voice, and how can we follow Jesus, unless we are near Him? How keep our spiritual vision clear unless He be with us to bring light out of darkness? As the branches wither and die separated from the vine, so do we, without Christ. Separated from Him, we are cumberers of the ground. Without His abiding presence, we are in imminent danger of being assailed and over-

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come by our vigilant and powerful enemy. Left to ourselves, we are helpless indeed. But how safe we are if we carry everything to Him. And how strong we are if we clasp His hand. In His calm presence how insignificant are the small troubles of every day; and the doubts and questionings which have hitherto perplexed us vanish away; all the crooked and tangled things become straight; all the things which once so wounded and vexed us lose their power over us, and all our restlessness disappears in the presence of Peace itself.

That it Might be Fulfilled.

THERE are many things recorded in sacred and profane history which, at the time of their occurrence, seemed disastrous or unfortunate, which were often but the carrying out of the wicked purposes of men, yet happened and were accomplished that God's plan concerning the world might be fulfilled.

All can recall many instances of the kind, and indeed we need only to review our own lives to see that, while no chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness ; so that whatever happens we need not let our hands fall down, nor our knees become feeble, but looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, run with patience the race set before us, remembering that while God's providences are mys-

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terious, they are but the fulfilment of His plans concerning others or ourselves. God's purposes are grand, and compass the ages. We catch only glimpses of what He is doing. We are only unshapely masses of unhewn stone tumbled in confusion here and there, and tall cedars and fir-trees spreading their roots and branches on mountain heights, and gold and precious stones imbedded still in solid rock or still seething in the furnace. We cannot see even in imagination the beautiful building the great Architect will bring forth from that which is now rough and unshapely.

From chaos He wrought our world of beauty, and sun, moon, and stars perform His glorious command—"Let there be light!" not withholding for a moment their bright rays, going on steadily in their appointed way until their great glory be hidden by the Greater Glory whose light shall fill all heaven and earth. In the same manner will God bring out His spiritual kingdom

THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED.

from its present chaotic state into glory and beauty unfading, and which though the heavens, may fall, will stand throughout eternity.

God has a use for each one of us in carrying out His plan, insignificant and useless as our lives may often seem to ourselves. Not everything which is of value is conspicuous or significant. Hidden things are often of as much importance in the accomplishment of a great purpose as those which are visible. We are very small parts of a very large whole, and all the misfortune and unhappiness that ever came to us is but a grain in the accumulated weight of human woe. If it is necessary that we should be crushed and bruised in order to become ready for the Master's use, then should we not be willing to be crushed and bruised?

Whatever is needful to prepare us to fill our appointed place in God's great plan we should be willing to receive, no matter what chipping away of cherished forms and lineaments there

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may be. It matters not whether we become costly stones, or beams of cedar, or planks of fir, posts of olive-tree, or pure gold ; we cannot arrive at this fitness for use without being hewn, or chiseled, or refined. All things are being made ready for that temple which will never be destroyed.

Shall we allow ourselves to be thrust aside as useless because we are not willing to submit to the processes of preparation ? Because we are not willing that unpleasant things, and what at the time seem great trials, should come to us that all may be fulfilled according to God's purpose ?

Let us be careful not to make ourselves in our own imagination the centre of God's care, expecting Him to grant us especial favor. He has a vast family in His care, and all the good things are not given to a chosen few. Sometimes it may be necessary for us to suffer in order that others may be helped in some way

THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED.

by that suffering. We are called upon to be losers, maybe, that others may be the gainers. The burden and heat of the day must sometimes be ours that others may rest. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of God," is a Divine command. Let us hold ourselves ready to be used by the great Master Builder in whatever way He wills. Whether He makes of us brazen pillars to be of real service, or only modest lilies for the adornment of these pillars, is a matter of little moment. That He counts us worthy to be of even the humblest service, is a cause for our deepest gratitude. If His will be fulfilled, however it may affect us, it is enough. And so instead of fretting and regretting and wondering whether if we had done thus and so things would have been different, let us leave the past with God and earnestly seek to be willing that His will only be done. Harmony cannot be wrought out of chaos without many severe processes, which only God can under-

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stand or apply. And in whatever degree we are rebellious toward Him, to that extent do we hinder the drawing nigh of the time when Christ shall reign triumphant over all evil, and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Things often happen to us which we cannot understand. Let us be willing that these things should happen in order that God's will may be fulfilled. Misfortune overwhelms us. Let us bear up bravely under it, with the thought that this has something to do with the fulfilment of the Divine will. When our friends die, it is that it may be fulfilled. When sickness comes upon us, or when our cherished purposes fail, it is that God's purpose concerning us in reference to His kingdom may be fulfilled. Even our most humiliating mistakes may have a "That it might be fulfilled" connected with them.

Considered in this light, there is no real misfortune ; and just so far as we are in harmony with God's will, just so far will unhappiness drop

THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED.

out of our lives, and what we now call chastisements be received as ultimate blessings.

When the day comes for that grand and silent building of the Eternal Temple—when neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron may be heard, shall we be left out because we are not ready?

“’Tis the Master who holds the mallet,
And day by day
He is chipping whatever environs
The form away.

With tools of Thy choosing, Master,
I pray Thee then,
Strike just as Thou wilt ; as often
And where and when
The vehement stroke is needed,
I will not mind,
If only the chipping chisel
Shall leave behind
Such marks of Thy wondrous working,
And loving skill,
Clear carven on aspect, stature,
And face, as will
(When discipline’s ends are over),
Have all sufficed
To mould me into the likeness
And form of Christ.”

Common Sense in Religion.

HOW much contentment and true happiness is missed by the lack of common sense manifested by the majority of people in their every-day living. It is a rare thing to find a person who is earnest and sensible, and who does not feel compelled to do as others do, who has the moral courage to depart from the rules and conventionalisms of society, and to face boldly and with true dignity the false judgments and even ridicule of those who suspect him to be ignorant of the same, because he does not conform to them strictly enough to meet their approbation.

What people say, and what people think are often more weighty considerations in deciding upon one's manner of living than his own inter-

ests, absurd as this may seem when one reflects upon it. That this is true of many Christians as well as of people of the world, is greatly to be deplored, and it is time that more of the simplicity and common sense of the religion of Christ were made manifest in our homes, in society, and in the church.

Think for one moment how much courage it requires, as things are, for one associating with those who dress fashionably to wear contentedly last year's bonnet, or a dress two or three years old. What condition of things is that which fixes a value upon an acquaintance in accordance with the richness and style of her clothing? What opinion can one have of herself for judging of the mental and moral acquirements of another by the dress? If one should choose to wear the fashion of twenty years ago, what matter? All the fashions return again in time. The old become the new, and the new the old. What difference? There should be equal rights

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in these things so that none need feel the weight of custom pressing too heavily, and that the freedom of Christianity may enter into our style of dress, and that the consistency and common sense of true religion may be shown in what we wear and how we wear it. First of all, we should dress within our means, wear what is modest and becoming and not in the extreme of the fashion. Clothing has its proper uses, and is not for mere display—to excite the admiration or envy of those about us. We dress in the best taste when our dress does not attract attention, and when once put on properly, we need not think of it again until we take it off. It is not necessary to dress meanly. Our clothing may be of expensive material, and yet be modest and every way suitable. Indeed, it is the greatest economy to buy the best of the kind required, and have it made in a pretty and becoming style, and the garment may be worn two or three years without alteration.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION.

The years that are going by cannot be recalled, and we are all growing old more rapidly than we realize. If we are to accomplish anything in life that is worth accomplishing, it is time we began. The exercise of common sense and good judgment in our every-day matters may leave us more time to devote to special and more important objects.

It is not to be expected that those in the world and society who have no interest in the Christian religion (is it because they have no souls to save that they are not interested in it?) will spend much time or thought upon these things, but not so of Christians. We are not our own. Our time is not our own, neither is our money. We have given them all to Christ. He it is we must consult in regard to the use we make of everything.

In seeking not to dress too much, let us avoid the other extreme, and not be so indifferent to our personal appearance as to be wanting in

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neatness and propriety. It would not be pleasing or honoring to Jesus for those whom He loves to neglect the body. It is the home of a soul which should be beautiful, as He regards beauty, and it should possess a quiet charm attractive to one's friends and to all good people. In a word, if we dress in a manner which pleases Him whose we are, what the world says or thinks about it is of no consequence whatever.

There is another thing in which our influence is stronger than in that of dress, wherein we fail to use good sense, and to show ourselves consistent Christians. It is in our conversation, which differs far too little from that of persons who are not Christians. Who can listen to the conversation of a dozen ladies whom one incidentally meets at a gathering or at a public resort, without feeling in a great measure disquieted or ashamed? It hardly seems possible that intelligent beings, lovely in the image of their Maker, endowed with reason, gifted often,

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with the power of rising to an unlimited height, capable of reaching after, and in a measure grasping the infinite, should be satisfied to talk of little besides dress and fashion and gossip, should be apparently satisfied with a life so unworthy.

When the subjects for profitable conversation are so varied and so ample, when the mind expands so rapidly under the influence of the interchange of thought and sentiment—when thought and sentiment are worthy of expression—what a pity that one should be satisfied with nonsense. And when to all the other gifts and graces of womanhood are added the Christ-like and crowning graces of religion, how surprising and humiliating all this is.

One might fail to recognize a Christian lady in such companionship, but strange to say, there are many Christians who demean themselves in just this kind of foolish, uninteresting, unworthy conversation by the hour, and think nothing of it. What power can rouse the thousands of

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women who thus waste the time, the talents, the energy God has given them, to a true sense of their obligation to Him and to themselves? What a revolution must take place in society and in the Church before the simplicity and nobleness of Christ-like lives will be realized among women ; before the light of wisdom and truth will shine forth steadily from their lives to illuminate the world in which they move. It is plain that women do not understand their power or their importance in the world, or so many of them would not lead the life of butterflies.

And how is it at home? Is common sense exercised there? Far too little. Many live beyond their means, hoping for something unusual to occur in time to save them from disaster. Many live up to their means so closely, that when there is an unusual demand upon them, they are in trouble. And to what end is this hazardous way of living? For comfort? It cannot give comfort. It can only bring harassing

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care and anxiety, and the miserable satisfaction of knowing that what the world looks upon is fair, with nothing to excite the suspicion that poverty or even limited circumstances may be lurking about; and to this poor end personal good sense, comfort, and happiness are sacrificed.

When Christ tells us that we need take no thought for the morrow, He takes it for granted that we are using wisely and prudently the things of to-day, and not wasting our money in extravagance and useless display to convince our neighbors that we are persons of importance. He would not do that. When on the earth He sought not to win the praise of the world by display. How simply and plainly He lived. Cannot we all learn from Him a lesson essential to the highest good and happiness of multitudes of people, indeed to every one, whether in the church or in the world?

No doubt there are many who would break away from the yoke imposed upon them by the

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acquisition of wealth and position, and the tyranny of custom if they had the courage to do it. No doubt the existing false state of things is a burden to many who long for better things. But who will break away from it? Who will lead the multitude of burdened ones into a better life, and to an inestimable increase of happiness? It cannot be possible that such are satisfied with the manner in which they are spending their life. The God-given germ within them cannot be wholly dead. There must be frequent and earnest longings in their hearts for something better.

Alas! how many Christians are drawn into the current and float with the rest, resisting feebly or not at all the tide which is carrying them farther and farther from the true centre of all good, and bringing dishonor upon Jesus Christ whom they profess to love and obey.

No one should feel compelled to do as others do, merely because others do it. There never was a greater curse entailed upon any one than

the false idea of aping other people. We are individuals. We have individuality. Let that individuality be preserved in all the relations of life. One has poverty, another has wealth. Let the poor man live according to his poverty, and the rich man according to his wealth, neither of them envying or sneering at the other. One has rare ability, another has mediocre talent. Let the first use his ability for the best and purest purposes, and the other do the best he can, and let each be content with the other. One is fond of dress and willing to spend half her time in adorning her person. Another finds these things a burden from which she wishes to be freed. Let the former waste her time thus if she wishes; what is that to the other? And let the latter walk in freedom, and dress as is convenient. Whose affair is it but her own?

Half the misery produced by envy and wounded pride, and slights real or imaginary, comes from the miserable entanglements which exist in

society. For each one is afraid to be as God made him and intended him to be, through fear some one else will take exceptions to something he may do or say, or something he may leave undone or unsaid. Let there be perfect independence. Let each one be a unit of unique value, capable of standing quite alone.

True living does not consist in the position we hold in the world, or in the church, neither in the amount of worldly comfort and pleasure with which we are able to surround ourselves; still less in the good or bad opinion of our fellow-men. That is the most noble life which gives little thought as to whether one is known or unknown, but which moves on sweetly and quietly in its appointed sphere, gathering each day the flowers within easy reach, and patiently extracting the thorns which are hidden in the sweetest flowers, valuing the highest those things which Christ values the highest, and shedding around the lustre of a Christ-like character.

Another of the unfortunate lines drawn between man and man is pride of family. It is a good thing to be able to look back upon a long line of noble ancestry ; but the man whose ancestors were plebeians, and who wins for himself nobleness, is superior to the man whose nobility is an inheritance. It is not what our fathers were, but what we are that should claim for us the highest regard. It is character only that bears all tests through all time ; that shines bright and pure in the clear lights of the supreme moments in life when we are called to noblest deeds, or bravest endurance. And when that hour comes in which we all must stand before God in the clear light of heaven, what then can stand but greatness of soul ?

The King of Heaven chose His earthly lot among the most lowly of His children, and esteemed those noble only who were noble in character. He taught His disciples not to seek high places, to seek no worldly honor or fame ; that

the greatest victories they could achieve would be to conquer their own spirits, and that those who followed in the meek and lowly path He trod would be exalted to His throne in heaven.

God made all men equal as regards individual rights and privileges; equal in the contest for knowledge, goodness, and truth. He places low in the scale of humanity those who deserve to be low, and those who merit a high position are in His esteem already high, without regard to wealth, or family, or blood. His scale of measurement is ours reversed: "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

When we see men and things from His standpoint as nearly as we may, then will the galling chains drop off, and we be free to live in accordance with the common sense of true religion. Then will our dress, our conversation, our homes, our daily living, our position, grow into conformity with His will, and we belong to God's nobility, a privilege which is conferred upon

many who are scorned by the nobility of this world.

There are large beams in the eyes of the world. It does not see clearly. Then let us not place much value upon its judgments ; rather let us walk quietly with God under all circumstances, ruling our lives by that of His beloved Son, in whom there was no guile.

Our Responsibility.

WHETHER we realize it or not, whether the fact is acceptable to us or not, or however strong our effort may be to throw it off, our responsibility to God, to men, to ourselves, remains the same. We cannot shut ourselves within ourselves if we try. We cannot build around ourselves a wall of separation from other people, so that it would be the same to them as if we were not in existence. It can never be the same to them. Human beings touch each other in some way. It is a law of nature which cannot be revoked. Humanity is a common brotherhood.

There are lines drawn sufficiently marked, it would seem, to separate completely different classes of society ; but they cannot thus be sepa-

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rated. The rich influence the poor, and the poor the rich ; the good influence the bad, and the bad the good. All classes are bound together, because all are human beings ; all have souls ; by all must be waged the battle of life ; all have their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and their victories, and to all must come finally the common lot of death, and the probability of being entirely forgotten before many generations shall have succeeded theirs ; and upon all rests the burden of responsibility.

Christ calls our influence the light we shed around us. Is it a true or false light? Will it warn others from evil ways, or lead them into these ways? Is it wavering or uncertain and deceiving like the will-o'-the-wisp, or steady and bright, leading always toward truth and the beauty of holiness? Christ said, "Let your light so shine that men may take knowledge of your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

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Especially in our homes should our light shine clear and steady. If our influence there is cheering, strong, and helpful—if our responsibility there is fulfilled carefully and prayerfully as in the presence of our God, then will there be shining from us a light which will never grow dim, and an influence will be felt almost without limit.

It is in little ways that we are most tempted to hide our light. Physical ailments are frequently the cause, but not a good excuse for a surly good-morning, or a hasty word which will sting through all the day. It is not the burning, scorching, concentrated heat of the sun that is most acceptable, but the diffused rays reaching into all the dark corners, and bringing warmth and life everywhere. And it is not the brilliant flashes of light which we shed around us that render our lives and the lives of others more lovely and lovable, but the diffused light of little words and deeds. Neither is the severe storm so

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lasting in its influence as the continued dropping which wears away the stone. We can endure an occasional outburst of anger more patiently than the petty fretting and fault-finding which is of daily occurrence in many homes.

Sunshine then, sunshine everywhere ! Keep absolute control of your tongue and of your manner. Crush back the hasty word. If things don't suit you, don't find fault. This never induced any one to comply cheerfully with your wishes, and never will. Approach one another in love and tenderness when any difficulty is to be discussed or mistake corrected. It is easy to avoid petty bickerings and strife in a home if all its members will be watchful over themselves ; and watchfulness is absolutely necessary. Words slip out so easily. The tone of the voice partakes so much of the feeling, and we are creatures of impulse. We have need often to say to ourselves, "Wait a moment. What am I going to say ?" "What am I going to do ?" Think-

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ing before speaking would many times save bitter and sometimes life-long regrets.

We cannot think or speak, we cannot laugh or weep, or keep silent, stretch forth our hands or withhold them, give or receive without influencing some one ; and whatever influence that is, we are. The water which flows from the fountain partakes of the precise nature of the fountain. If we speak gently, and our manner is always gentle, then are we gentle. If our influence upon others is a Christian influence, then are we Christ-like. If our influence is worldly, then, whatever we may call ourselves, we are worldly. Our every act is of the utmost consequence to ourselves and to our race, for our influence does not stop with those with whom we come into immediate contact, but it circles on to the outermost edge of time. Our words and deeds weigh more heavily in the scale of human weal or woe than we are apt to think. Every hour we are weaving a web which will entangle souls in deeper misery, or we

are drawing by the fine and beautiful threads of our lives souls nearer to the truth, to beauty and goodness—nearer to heaven.

There are those who will say, "Why make life so serious and gloomy?" We are not dolls or puppets! That our acts are of consequence, gives beauty and dignity to our lives; and the same God who created us with the capacity to influence others, will strengthen us to bear the burden of responsibility resting upon us, and to meet our weighty obligation to do good and not evil.

God's way is a way of light. The gloomy path has once been trod by Him who carried from His cradle to His grave the burden of our sins. He trod this path to open for us a smoother, brighter path. He bore the crushing burden that we might have no burdens. His life went out in darkness that ours might go out in light. He bore the cross that we might wear the crown. Instead of breaking down under a morbid fear

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of never being able to meet the demands upon us, we must clasp hands with Him who is our strength and our shield.

It is only by perfect obedience to His commandments, a constant taking up of the cross, and a close following in His footsteps, that we can hope to fulfil our obligations to God, to our fellow-men and to ourselves. The Son of God will not lead us into any error. His commandments are not grievous, nor the cross of His appointing too heavy. It is when we rely upon ourselves, and disobey Christ's teaching, and choose our own paths and our own crosses, that our lives are failures and our influence evil. We need to have our souls lighted with fire from off God's altar, for all the miserable failures which men and women make in the matter of their responsibility is because their souls are not so lighted.

Seek, Knock, Give.

“Seek and you shall find.” *Seek first.*

“Knock and it shall be opened unto you.” *Knock first.*

“Give and it shall be given unto you.” *Give first.*

THERE is much seeking in this world. All are seeking something; selfish gratification, the approbation of friends, costly apparel, fine dwellings, high places, riches, honor, fame; all striving, struggling, reaching out eager hands to have them filled with whatever they most desire.

What does Christ say? “Seek first the kingdom of heaven!” With what results? “And all things else shall be added unto you.” Then this is all the seeking we need to do. Having found Jesus, and through Him the kingdom of heaven, we have all *needful* things added. We are not to sit down idly, however, expecting every

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good thing to fall into our hands with nothing done on our part. Having found the pearl which enriches us through all eternity, we are to follow Jesus, even though He lead us into hard work, and we have little earthly reward.

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.”

And if the promised all things else prove to be no more of earthly comfort and ease than our Lord had, can we utter one complaint? May we not rather rejoice to be as our Lord? His time and strength were given to His life-work regardless of worldly gain or ambition. He was content to have no place to lay His head, and our wants are innumerable. Let us try to measure the needs of life more by His standard, and count it our highest honor to live simply, so that we may have much time and strength to give to our Father's business.

SEEK, KNOCK, GIVE.

Seek *first* the kingdom of heaven. We thus begin with the highest good, and all less weighty matters will be arranged for us in the good providence of God, so that if we have the *kingdom* we have *all things*.

Seek as Christ seeks, earnestly.

Some of us expect the door to be always open wide into all kinds of temporal and spiritual blessings, and that all we have to do is to walk in and appropriate to ourselves whatever we please. But here again there is something for us to do before we are permitted to enter ; a simple thing, but something. Jesus might have made the way of entrance into the highest good much more difficult for us, but He imposes upon us easy yokes and light burdens, that we in bearing them may show our willingness to obey Him, and to follow wherever He may lead us ; and so He bids us knock at the door, and gives us the assurance that we shall be admitted through

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this open door into whatever is highest and best.

And even though it be an ever open door, we are to approach reverently, and not with too great familiarity. Jesus does not enter our hearts rudely, without bidding ; He knocks ; and if He hear no welcoming voice, He turns away sadly, grieving at our great loss in not receiving Him into our hearts, to come again and again with patience and sweetness, hoping to gain admittance at last.

Who will not do so simple a thing as knock, to be received as His guest, and to dwell in Him forever !

Who will not open the door of his heart to the Crucified One, that He may be to him the Abiding Christ.

If every one would say to Him as He says to every one, " Knock and it shall be opened unto you," how quickly would peace and goodwill to men reign on the earth, and the strong-

holds of Satan become the strongholds of the Lord !

Knock as Christ knocks—persistently.

We are inclined to wait until much is given unto us, before we think of giving. Until so much is given to us that it requires no sacrifice or self-denial, and we do not in the least miss what we give. Jesus understood human nature too well not to see our selfishness and provide a remedy ; and so He gave us the apparently unreasonable command to give, even before we receive. But He no doubt meant, “ Give what you have, and more shall be given unto you.”

We are all born with some gifts and graces. We can give smiles, love, patience, forbearance, confidence, a pressure of the hand, a word of cheer, a “ come up hither.” And none of us are so poor that we cannot give money, even though it be but a few pennies, where money is needed. Whatever we have, however small it may be, we

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are to give continually, and the more we give the more we shall receive. This is not in agreement with any human calculation, but with the divine arrangement; and we all know by experience how beautiful is that arrangement; for we cannot live wholly to ourselves without exhausting ourselves, and the only way to build ourselves up, is by giving ourselves away.

That which we receive is not always of the same kind as that we give, but often far better. The widow who gave the two mites may not have had her store of mites afterward increased, but how far more precious to her was the approbation of her Lord, and the lasting monument His words built to her memory. Let us not be deceived with the suggestion the evil one is always making to us, that we have nothing to give. Poor and meagre, and dwarfed indeed must his life be who cannot in some way make the world better and happier for his having lived in it. Let us give, then, of all we possess, as Christ gives, royally.

The Parting of the Way.

AT every parting of the way look carefully for the sign of the cross, and do not let your eyes become so dazed by the shining of the showy, gilded sign-board pointing the other way, that you do not see the words upon the cross written in letters of blood—

“THIS WAY, MY CHILD.”

When you are greatly perplexed and in doubt what to do, you are at a cross-road, and it is of the utmost importance which way you take, for the termination of the two ways may be vastly remote from each other, and one of them must of necessity lead you entirely away from the place for which you set out.

There are many paths which cross each other, so small that you think you do not need direc-

tion, that it makes no difference which one you take. It does make much difference. Many footpaths lead into highways, and some that seem straight at the beginning are crooked, and you waste time in taking them, even if they come out right at the last. Time is short, and you need to follow the straight and unobstructed paths to worthy goals. Even at the outset, there is no time to lose ; and at twenty, thirty, forty years, surely there is none.

You sometimes think you would like to go back and start again. How much better to have gone rightly from the beginning, so as to waste no time in retracing your steps. And then the course of the years is ever onward ; we cannot retrace our steps.

Sometimes you think there is some mistake, because your path is narrow and obscure, leading through unfrequented regions. If you are following the path marked out by the sign of the cross, do not doubt, do not be discouraged. You

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know not how soon nor how suddenly it may emerge into the broad highway, nor into the golden streets of heaven.

The cross-roads and diverging paths in life are many. We are often compelled to ask, "Which is the right way?" Dare to ask it of no one but Jesus Christ. His answer will always be, "The way of the cross."

There are paths which look pleasant and safe, wherein we see many walking, into which we are tempted to enter. Can we place a cross at the entrance to these paths without desecrating it? Can we walk in them without grieving our Lord?

To what are we asking the way? To wealth, to honor, to fame? The cross leads not to these. It points in the way He trod. Are you able to follow in the thorny, desolate way, rejected of men, crucified as to your own will, then go by the sign of the cross. He endured all this and more for you, and is it not a small matter

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for you to give your life to Him that He may use it as He wills? And while one side of the cross is dyed in blood, the other side is illuminated and emits rays of light which pierce far into the unknown path before us revealing Jesus walking as our guide ; and if in moments of discouragement we think some other way might lead more smoothly on to the same goal, we have only to listen quietly to hear the gentle voice, " This is the way, my child."

The cross points to everything pure and beautiful. The other sign-board points to selfishness, to sin, and a final dwarfing of the soul to minute proportions, so that God would hardly recognize in it the work of His hands. The cross here points to the crown in heaven, to golden harps, to white robes, and everlasting glory ; the other sign-board to chains, to final condemnation, to endless remorse.

Do not think that the cross points one way to all. It turns upon the pivot of God's love,

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and points in different ways according to His will. The way to some is over a hill Difficulty, or through sloughs of despondency, or through shadowy valleys. But the Guide is always at hand to assist at need. To some there are lions in the way, but they need not fear. God will send an angel to shut the lions' mouths.

When we come to diverging paths, one may seem smooth and safe, the other rough and dangerous. It is quite natural to choose the smooth way; but if the cross points to the dangerous way, enter it fearlessly. There is no danger too great to encounter for His sake; and often things that frighten us are only lions chained.

When hard questions perplex, look carefully to see which way the cross points. When tempted to follow broad and inviting paths, let us look for the cross. When we are weary and discouraged, the cross points to rest after toil. When we are sin-burdened, it points to the Lamb of God, our sacrifice. When we are lonely, it points

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to Him our best friend. When we mourn, it points to Him our Comforter.

“THIS WAY, MY CHILD.”

Ever near us, placing at every parting of the way His cross, is our Redeemer, who died that we might live forever, redeemed, glorified, a great company which no man can number—around the throne, forever blessed, with crosses all left behind, and crowns resplendent with jewels, and the glory of God and His Son filling all.

The cross at the beginning of the way and at many turning-points, and at the end the crown of glory for all who forsake not the way of the cross.

Make a wise choice at the parting of the way!

Are we Growing Old?

WE are apt to think when we turn two score years that we are growing old ; that our life is at its ebb ; that whatever preparation for the proper fulfilment of life's duties we have neglected, cannot be made now ; that if we find ourselves at this period of life uneducated, undeveloped, wanting in this or that acquirement or accomplishment, there is little use in trying to make up for it now. We are too old. Life is too far gone. We shall soon be growing gray, and passing on into the shadows. But let us look back a little. How many years of our life were devoted to physical growth? Fourteen or fifteen. How much of this time to mental development? Seven or eight. How much time at the college or the seminary? Four or five, making eighteen or twenty in all. If then we were prepared to

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enter upon active life at the early age of twenty, we have had only twenty years of activity, and are worn out at that ; are now getting past our prime !

The life-work of many does not begin until they are thirty, or even forty ; and if we are cherishing any morbid, unhealthy fancies in regard to our waning powers, let us throw them aside and remember that we are now in our prime ; and if we have already wasted so much of our life that we are still unprepared for earnest work, let us begin our preparation at once. Fifty years may be added to our life, and is it not worth while to spend three, four, even ten years if need be, in making ready for that " added length of days " even at forty ?

Our blessed Lord spent thirty years in preparation for a ministry of three years. Should not this be a lesson of patient perseverance and a rebuke to our haste and superficialness in our own education and self development ?

ARE WE GROWING OLD?

It is unfortunate that it should be necessary to begin any preparation so late in life, for one does not then learn as easily, and there are many more distractions and cares; but it is far better than not at all; and what we need to do first is to rid ourselves of the thought that we are now too old to learn. The best part of our life is before us. Forty years of experience have not been lost. We have learned much in this way if in no other. We can look upon life more calmly, and with clearer sight. We can weigh people and things more accurately, and adjust them in their proper places as regards ourselves. We are stronger in our manhood and womanhood, and stronger in faith and hope. Many things have disappointed us, but there is much left which cannot disappoint.

We have, perhaps, spent much time heretofore in the accumulation of property, in the care of children, in seeking to advance our own interests. Now we may be able to give more time to

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others, in such ways as are presented to us, and if our years for preparation have not been idly wasted, how much good may every one of us accomplish.

Forty years seem long when we think only of our life here, especially to those who in that time have experienced much sorrow and many changes; but in the thought of the eternal years, it is only a beginning. And when we realize as well we may, that to the soul there comes neither decay nor death, how can we ever feel that we are growing old. When millions and millions of years have passed, we shall still be young. We are never-dying spirits in bodies which must at last grow old and fade away; immortal souls, just on the threshold of our existence. Why should we consider the years that are gone as a large part of our lives, when we are babes still, cradle-rocked in the arms of God, still needing His guiding hand that we may be kept from falling, still loving the foolish things of this

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world, and constantly thinking our own way the best?

Old at forty? Why, we are just beginning to walk a little by catching hold of objects nearest to us. Ours is but a child's comprehension of the all that is begun here to be perfected in heaven.

As regards this life we may indeed feel that the dignity of manhood and womanhood is ours at forty, that the season of our life called youth has wholly passed, that we stand at a point where the past and the future are about evenly balanced. If it is a grand thing to have lived so long, it will be grander still to live forty years longer. It would seem that after so much experience the rest of life might count for much. That there need be no more time wasted, no more energy spent upon unworthy objects or pursuits, no more feeding upon common fare, but that the rest of life should be rich and full, with each day showing a better fitness for heaven, until we are

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bowed down with age, yet only for a little while here, to wake some morning yonder and find ourselves forever young.

Take up then your life-work just where you have laid it down. You are still strong for work, and with the richness and fulness of advancing years there may come into your soul joy and peace—the conscious reward of work well done. Try to comprehend the all of life. Avoid using it as if it were merely something to be endured; as if the life-battle were only to gain a sustenance for the body. Even to the humblest laborer life should be something more than this. It should be to him the threshold of heaven—all his troubles and hardships only stepping-stones thither. None need be mere laborers. Work is not incompatible with the deepest spirituality, the highest sensitiveness and refinement. To be spiritual it is not necessary to retire within secluded walls, or to lay aside the active pursuits of life. Spiritual things and

temporal things do not clash. As body and spirit serve each other, so the natural and the spiritual go together in our lives. We need not seek to separate them. We need not think that spirituality on our part is impossible because our days are full of ordinary labor.

The Saviour of the world, by leading the way, made it possible for us to perform the humblest duty, and at the same time keep the mind clear, the heart pure, and the spirit calm. While looking at the stars we need not stumble in our way. While our hands are busy, the spirit may be free. What is needed more than anything else is a belief in the possibility of a life of spiritual freedom while under the bondage of work and worry.

It is desirable to have one's surroundings pleasant and beautiful, to have the dwelling cheerful and attractive with artistic decoration, agreeable books, and fine pictures; but how much more desirable a spiritual beauty, with resources for unfailing happiness growing out of

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a mind at rest. In one's self must be the source of the spring which will make and keep fresh and green all the pathway of life, and secure a perpetual youth. What if the walls are bare and the house desolate? In the soul there may be wealth and beauty, and joy which will endure forever, and without which all external wealth and adornment and apparent joy will be as ashes.

Then, whatever your age may be, train yourself to the highest culture. Begin at the right place, that you may lose neither time nor effort. Seek first the kingdom of God. In the Lord's prayer, the petition "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," comes before all the personal petitions. If all had begun the Christian life in childhood, what an advantage would have been gained; but alas! how many have waited until they were old. To follow the wrong path forty, fifty, seventy years, and only seek the kingdom in the last hours of life, how dreadful! How

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sad to think of the influence of such lives upon others who have come in contact with them.

We count the years allotted to the life of the body. The length of life allotted to the soul cannot be estimated. Let not the number of years, then, weigh too heavily upon the spirit; it can never grow old, but it can grow in goodness, in knowledge, in love and purity, till it will bear the weight of declining physical powers in a sweet and heavenly manner, till second childhood will be but the renewal of the spirit's youth, and an obedient answer to the suggestion of our Saviour, "Except ye become as little children, ye can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." All of us call to mind examples of this in dear old people whom we have known, when it seemed that the older they grew, the more lovely they became, till "Holiness to the Lord" was written on their foreheads.

At two score we stand upon an eminence from which we can look both ways: backward

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to infancy, forward to old age. The long slope up which we have climbed to reach this eminence is shrouded in mist in the distance, and we cannot see its beginnings clearly. Memory fails to reveal to us the lights and shadows of infancy ; but where the mist ends, clear sunshine begins, with only here and there a shadow as of a man's hand. Later, the shadows are larger, and storms threaten, but near us is a clear sky, and the clouds wear the brilliancy of noonday. Directly above there may be dark clouds, or a sky of heavenly blue ; but we may look calmly at either, for we are nearing the slope on the other side, down which we see cool avenues and refreshing streams ; and though we fancy we see farther on clouds gathering, and deep, bridgeless rivers and fiery clouds, we see beyond the clouds our Sun and Shield ; in the far west, where the sun sets, we see heavenly glory, and through an open window in the battlements of the sky, heaven's portals glistening and a beckoning hand, and hear a voice

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saying, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted His people."

Surely we need not fear or be troubled as we enter upon the downward slopes of life. While our bodies must, after a few years, begin to lose their vigor, our spirits may still mount higher and gain victory after victory until all the battles are fought, and we calmly wait our turn to pass into the shadows—then in a moment to exchange the cross for the crown, the decay of earth and the feebleness of age for the glory of immortality and days of eternal youth.

Ready to die at forty? Ah, no! Ready to live! Look back; look forward. Forty years in the

past ; forty, perhaps, in the future. Is it not nearly certain that the last may be the best, may bring forth fruit abundantly from the seed sown from infancy until now? We value time too little. What may one year do for us, or what may we do in one year? Let us reach out hands of helpfulness, reach out hands of love ; and whatever we find to do, do it with our might. For when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the fields white to the harvest, and we not reaping? Shall He find the sheaves bound and ready and we not gathering them in? Whatever our age, shall He find us idly waiting because we are growing old?

Encouragement for the Poor.

THERE is nothing at which we wonder more than the great contrasts which exist in the arrangement of human affairs in regard to the things of this world. Looking at the existing condition of things without serious contemplation, we are ready to cry out against the injustice of immense wealth on the one hand, and abject poverty on the other ; of the honor bestowed upon a few men, to the absolute neglect of hosts of others quite as worthy ; of the satiety of comforts and luxuries in one direction, and the meagre distribution of the same in the other.

But we need consider only for a moment to see what a strange condition of affairs would exist if all were upon an absolute level, or if all were rich, or all were poor. That there should

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be an ascending and descending scale in the relation of human beings to each other is a necessity in the world's economy. In order that there may be workers in all grades of mental and manual labor, there must be many grades of position, and necessity for various kinds of work. Without that necessity, the world would stand still. But the contrasts need not be so great. God's arrangement in regard to these things has been perverted. Many men are poorer than God intended them to be, through their own lack of thrift, or their evil habits; and many men are richer than they ought to be, through their unjust gains. These are the things which engender envy, strife, and produce suffering, and induce some to call for a communistic division of property.

If those who find themselves low in the scale of social position consider that they are filling a part of God's plan, and fill it honorably, there will be no need for suffering poverty. If those

who are rich do their duty, none will have occasion to cry out against them.

Among those who accept their condition in life as an inheritance from their parents, and who consider it a matter of course that they should be poor, there is great contentment in earning their living and enjoying what to those more highly favored would seem meagre pleasures. But now and then there is one among them who feels that he is born to better things ; who is not satisfied with his lot, and who will try to struggle into a higher plane. He finds no congeniality in the companionship of his associates. They cannot understand his aspirations for something higher than that with which they are amply satisfied.

This is indeed an unhappy condition of things if he thinks only of himself. But may he not consider that some such spirits are needed to shed their light and influence among those who surround them, that they, being left to themselves, may not be mere working machines?

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May he not feel that his receiving must be largely through giving ; that his growing must be through much pruning and cutting away of vines to be planted in other gardens ?

Does not the branch that is buffeted and beaten by the storm and wind grow stronger ? And will not he through his struggle upward have an advantage over those who are born in luxury, upon whom storms seldom beat, and winds never blow ? Need any one be discouraged who is ushered into the world with little but his own energy to bear him on successfully through life ? With good health, this is enough. He is placed face to face with the world, to fight his own battles, and it requires the mustering of all his mental and physical forces to fight those battles well. By constant exercise he trains and strengthens all his powers for best use. To be dependent on his own exertions makes him manly. Work is noble, and it is the indolent only who suffer when poverty presses.

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Then you who are born to an inheritance of self-support, rejoice rather than complain. Put aside all imaginary wants, and live purely and temperately. If opportunities for mental culture do not readily present themselves, make opportunities, and doubly improve them, so that in the end you may excel those whose lives have been filled with advantages from the cradle. That he is poor is no good reason why any one should be ignorant, unrefined, or unmanly.

We are slow to learn the lessons of true living, even though they are so simple. God puts us wherever He wishes us to be. There are means within easy reach for our development in just the direction in which He wishes us to develop. As every little insect or living creature in embryo is placed in the centre of that which it will feed upon till it reaches conditions necessary to its removal to a farther advanced stage of life, so God places us in the centre of those influences which are to feed and mould us for the station

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in life He wishes us to fill. Many of us think our fare rather devoid of delicacies, and wonder often why things have not been arranged more for our ease and comfort ; and alas, sometimes we refuse to feed upon what God provides, and either starve, or forsake it for forbidden food, and try to satisfy ourselves with husks.

If all would take up their work just where God has placed them, and exhaust the resources of their immediate surroundings, use everything at their command till it is past use, waste nothing of the much God gives to every one whether he be rich or poor, work out from himself into every nook and corner of the limits placed around him, how grandly all would grow ! The law of compensation is God's law, and His creatures are not so impartially dealt with, after all, as one might suppose. The trouble comes from privileges and opportunities overlooked or thrust aside.

Many poor people are unhappy because they consider poverty a disgrace. Their pride suffers.

They are looked down upon by the rich. Well, what if they are? Does this injure them? Wherein lies the disgrace of poverty? Happiness and the highest good does not come from the manner in which others regard us, but from what we ourselves are, and from sources above the power of the human to bestow. One reason why the rich look down upon the poor is because they associate poverty with ignorance and want of refinement. This shows an ignorance of their fellow-creatures; and they forget how many leading men come from the ranks of lowly life, while few sons of rich men reach positions of honor and large influence except in name.

What credit is it to a man to be rich when his wealth is inherited? What honor is it to have a noble title when that title is either inherited or bought, compared with the credit and honor due to those who gain through their own honest and well-directed efforts either wealth or a good name?

The Saviour of the world gave the greatest

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consolation that could be given to the poor, by assuming a lowly condition, that of the peasant and the laborer; the son of a carpenter, Himself a carpenter in His youth, no doubt, helping His father Joseph to earn their daily bread, living the simple life of the poor, sharing their joys and sorrows, unnoticed and unknown except to the little circle about Him, finding His recreation in the quiet and beautiful scenery around His home, loving nature and all things pure and beautiful; and He also asserted the dignity of labor, and placed upon it the seal of His own hand, thus showing His sympathy with, and appreciation of all honest toil throughout all time, and removing from the curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground," its sharpest sting.

The Son of God, the Holy One, the Beautiful One, lived thirty years in poverty and toil, and in lowly and sweet submission to His lot, unnoticed and unknown!

Looking on this picture, which is not imaginary, but real, as are the lowly and self-sacrificing lives of thousands to-day, need any one feel that poverty is a disgrace, or that any toil or deprivation is too severe to be endured patiently for His sake ?

We are to make every possible effort to provide for those dependent upon us, as well as for ourselves, looking for God's daily blessing upon our efforts ; and if we fail, through ill health or accident, we should still sweetly accept God's will, and shunning all bad habits, leave ourselves in His care. It is not when the world smiles upon us, and all our earthly path is smooth and joyous, that the angels come and go upon the ladder reaching heavenward, bringing us messages of peace from Him who sitteth upon the throne, but often when we are alone, and fleeing from the world and its allurements, and sometimes when we are homeless and forsaken, out under the stars of heaven, the earth our bed, a

stone our pillow, and God our only refuge and strength. Nothing can cast us out of His presence. He will take us up quickly when men forsake us, and take us finally to Himself to enjoy the true riches which all, however poor they may be here, may inherit in the heavenly kingdom.

It is only when poverty is accompanied by vice that it is a curse.

Go into the thousands of humble homes scattered all over our land, and see how peace and contentment reign therein, when in many instances the daily toil provides only what is sufficient for the day itself, and where the Saviour's "Take no thought for the morrow" falls a welcome sound upon their ears; for how can they take thought for to-morrow whose resources are sufficient only for to-day?

Honest toil, simple and upright lives, the Christian's faith and hope make them quiet and tranquil, and their outlook into eternity is

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brighter than that of many who scorn them because they are poor.

But when intemperance and other vices enter in at the door, then abject poverty and untold misery is close at hand. Fear not poverty if you have the love of Christ in your heart, and His abiding presence in your home. If you love Him not, and your ways are evil, though millions of money were at your command, you are indeed poor, and wretched, and miserable; and far less to be envied than the poor man who does not know to-day where he will find his food on the morrow, but whose life is pure, whose feet are upon a sure foundation which will not fail him, though everything else totter and fall, though the earth melt and pass away.

Cired Mothers.

IT is a great joy and honor to be a mother. None know the wonderful, heavenly ecstasy which enters into her heart when her babe is placed on her bosom, nor the depth of the love and tenderness awakened at the birth of every child, but the mother. It is an experience which one cannot well afford to be without, that of bearing and rearing children. Even when death comes to take away the most beautiful one, that too opens a path in which it is good to walk, though it be in anguish of spirit; for it is better to have children and lose them, than not to have them at all. The discipline is refining, and to have children in heaven a never-ending joy. But they bring with them toil and trouble, anxious days and sleepless nights, and great trials of patience and physical endurance.

They throw chains around you which it is impossible to sever. You are no longer free. Your time is not your own. It belongs to them. From the first moment when the strange little voices are heard, they are tyrants, and you are a slave. How to bear the fetters lightly so that they will not oppress you, is a lesson well worth learning; for when the family increases rapidly, and there are two or three hardly past babyhood, how tired the mothers are. How often they feel disheartened, and hardly know which way to turn with the multiplicity of cares devolving upon them. This is the situation of every true mother, no matter how many nurses and servants she may have; and how is it when there are no nurses, and no servants? Tired mothers indeed. The world must be full of them.

There is no end to the buttons to be sewed on, the stockings to be darned, the holes to be mended. There is sweeping and cleaning, a

life-long battle with dust, cobwebs, and flies. It requires a great effort to decently exist ; to keep your house, your children, and yourself in order. The three meals follow each other in quick succession, then it is soon bed-time, and each succeeding day is like the others. How many women there are into whose life there comes little but this weary round of wearisome duties, with no time to enjoy the house in order, or the clean children, or a quiet evening.

It may be your own fault if life becomes to you thus full of care and labor. You may be inefficient, or too neat, or too great a care-taker. But often it seems inevitable. Is it possible, then, for you to be anything but a living automaton? How can you avoid it? How can you rise above circumstances which require your whole strength of mind and body to compass?

In the first place, do not overtax yourself. It is better to leave some things undone than to get so weary that a night of sound sleep will

not refresh you. Do not allow yourself to be tied up with cobwebs and buried in dust beyond escape or resurrection. If the house is not always in perfect order no one need be distressed about it. If your children are not always perfectly clean and tidy, it will not hinder their growing up to be good. Do the best you can toward the accomplishment of your daily duties, and when you have used the strength given you for the day, stop. You have done all that is required of you, and more, for a little strength and brightness should be reserved for the evening hours when your husband and children have leisure to enjoy your presence and helpful sympathy.

Do not try to conceal from your husband that you have genuine work to do each day. Husbands know little of household matters, though they are apt to think they know all about them. Do not hesitate to initiate him into their mysteries. It will make him more helpful and sympa-

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thetic to know your exact position and difficulties, and he will be more ready to excuse some things which you are unable to do even to your own satisfaction.

Try to find something to occupy and interest your mind while your hands are busy. If you live in the country, while the weather is warm, take all the work you can to the piazza or under a tree, and let the baby play about you. He will be less trouble out of doors, and the sunshine and fresh air will be of inestimable benefit to you both. There is a fine view near your house. Enjoy it for ten minutes each day. You will work the faster for the interruption.

While you are busy with indoor work, the sunshine comes streaming into your room, making beautiful pictures of shimmering leaves and drooping vines upon the walls; and this is God's message to you, "Cheer up." How bright it is. What a message of love it is to you from God. Will you heed it, and work for the rest of the

day with more hope, with lighter heart, and brighter face? The little birds work and sing. Have you not a song in your heart also, and does it not sometimes break forth into words? Sing while you work. It will make the work lighter.

Open your eyes to the beauty around you. If you live near the woods, enjoy them. Even the sight of them is refreshing, and an occasional ramble in them will teach you how nature everywhere is struggling to assert herself and do her utmost to improve every particle of dust, every drop of dew, and every stray sunbeam, to make herself useful and beautiful. Even the rocks, hard and barren as they are, nourish the mosses and lichens, which you will find to be wonderful miniature forests, if you look at them through the microscope.

Are there mountains in sight of your home? Then, indeed, are you fortunate, for nothing in nature can be more restful or joy-giving than the

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sight of mountains standing strong and silent against the sky, with sunset glory gilding them, or clouds kissing their brows, catching the first greeting of the morning sun, or made entrancing by the soft light of the moon; with mysterious caverns and recesses, where the shadows always lie, and ravines through which the mountain streams roar and tumble in beauty unseen; made green and beautiful by spring's soft colors, clothed in the splendor of autumn's gold and vermilion, or majestic with the snow-covered pines and bare-branched trees, sparkling in the winter's sunshine.

If you live near a river or the ocean, you have constant variety of scenery, for neither mountains, rivers, or oceans are less variable in their moods than we are, and even in dull, cheerless days, you see that in them which you may admire, and in which you may find sympathy. If you are denied social pleasures, you may find much compensation in being surrounded by the

pure, unselfish works of nature, which give much and exact little, and which never disappoint you. Though you may have none of these things, there are other resources for rest and pleasure and refining influence at your command. None are entirely without them. Look carefully into your life and surroundings, and see if there be not some source of joy and gratitude which you have hitherto overlooked. The source of the spring is not always apparent, and we may regard only as a common water-course or a pool of muddy water what, after the debris and dirt are cleared away, may prove to be a never-failing supply of pure water ; and there are some springs which lie deep under the surface. There are many springs of comfort in your life, if you will find them.

You ought not to be so tired. God does not intend that each day's burden should be heavier than you can easily bear. He gives strength and help for each day's needs. You can be

happy to-day, can you not? Or if this is one of the dark days, you can be patient and brave? Well, that is enough. To-morrow will bring its own strength and resources. You need not now take up to-morrow. God does not work miracles in our behalf, but He has arranged everything so that much help and comfort will come to us every day in easy, natural ways; and it is wrong for us not to accept what He gives and turn it to best account. Trees, flowers, grass, birds, sunshine, bright clouds, the wonderful blue sky ought to be to us a continual delight; the love of husband and children, a never-failing source of joy and thankfulness; the Bible a city of refuge.

There is a bright side to everything, no matter how dark the other side may be. We are never so badly off but that we might be worse off. Somebody looks upon us as fortunate.

Much unhappiness comes from envying those whom we consider in better circumstances than

ourselves, and trying to strain to their standard. How senseless, when none are so high but that somebody is higher, till you reach the highest, who are rarely happy. Be content. God rules. He can place you higher if He choose. Look upon your position and all that you have as God-given, and do not overlook any of His gifts, nor dishonor Him by believing that He has bestowed upon you the thorns, and upon some one else the roses. Sweet and bitter, roses and thorns for all, God-given.

In many instances where the care of your own family becomes a hardship, it is self-imposed. You are in the dull routine because you do not try to get out of it. You are overworked because you improve no opportunity to play. You are nervous because you shut yourself up too much in the house, keep your rooms too warm and badly ventilated. You wait on your children when they should be early taught to help you and each other. You fret too much if John

ny's clothes are torn or soiled, or if he shows no love for cleanliness, and you are forced to urge him to wash his face and hands, and brush his hair. You allow many trivial things to annoy you, when nothing less than an earthquake or an avalanche should move a mother.

What if the baby does fall off the bed and bump his head. Babies are always bumping their heads. What if Charlie tells a falsehood. It is not a sure sign that he will grow up a liar. Children are not born perfect, and there is no end to their hurts and bruises.

Mothers would be less tired if they were more sensible. Think of the time worse than wasted in the preparation of foods which every member of the family would be better without. Of the unnecessary time and labor spent upon the children's clothes. Of the many things done for mere show, or to do as others do, which add to no one's happiness or comfort. No matter if you do differently from every one else in the world,

if you do right, and make your home a true home. Live for comfort, and the good you can do. Dress your children plainly, that you and they need not be constantly fretted about their clothes. Furnish your house simply and comfortably, and have nothing that you must shut up in a dark room.

There are mothers who are tired because they have no clothing to mend, no stockings to darn, and who would give worlds for just such a pile of mending as that to which you sit down with a feeling of discontent ; for disorder in the house, for the tracks of soiled shoes on the floor, or prints of little fingers on the window-pane. Think of this, and imagine if you can what your life would be if you had none of these things ; if the patience-trying little ones were all silent forever, and there were no more noise in the house ; and put love and cheerfulness into all you do for them ; thus will the dullest work receive a brightness.

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Be careful not to become tired with imaginary troubles, lest God say of you, "There is my dear child to whom I have given many blessings. She does not appreciate them. She is continually clamoring for more, continually dissatisfied, and will not enjoy her husband, her children, her health, her home. She has no real troubles, but she thinks her lot which thousands might well envy her, a hard one, and is ungrateful and selfish. I cannot allow this. She is not making ready for heaven. Her soul is not growing. She is blind, and nothing will open her eyes but real trouble. Much as it grieves me to do it, I must take away something of that she hath already, instead of giving her more."

Oh, cannot you open your eyes to see what God is doing for you without chastisement being needful, and be gratefully happy, and rest in His love?

Oh, mothers, cannot you feel His love surrounding you, smoothing your path, warding off

from you dangers, giving you peace and quiet in your daily pursuits? And cannot you see the great glory of God, the Creator of all, in everything around you? The trees whisper it, the wind carries the message on swift wings, the sun mirrors it and sends it in one great flash of light and splendor all over the earth. The boundless blue sky in silence glorifies Him. And will you not glorify Him by your life?

And are you so tired, and so much absorbed in sordid cares that you cannot teach your sons to avoid the selfishness, the worldliness, the wickedness everywhere to be seen in the outside world? Do you so shut out all the beauty and all the glory from your life that the lessons they learn from you are only those of unblessed work and unhallowed care?

Open the windows of your soul and let in the glory of earth and sky; let in God's love, and God's strength. Then there will be a soft, glad light reflected from you on all the household, and

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joy and beauty will go hand in hand with work and care, and God will be glorified even in the most uninteresting bits of labor, and you will be weary only to rest again, to rest in Him who toiled patiently and sweetly to do His Father's will.

If there are days when it seems next to impossible to accomplish anything—and who does not have such days? — when physical energy is wanting, and you weary yourself with vain efforts to overcome your inefficiency, be quiet and patient with yourself, as you would be with the lame or blind, and do not try to do so much as on other days when the nerves are strong and the head clear.

Do not make life too weighty a matter, nor drag your feet in the mire when you should be walking lightly and cheerfully in the sunshine of God's love.

It is true that the cares of life often rise up as a cloud between us and God, but He is on one

side of it, and we know He is there, and we are on the other side, and He knows it, and there is but a thin, shadowy cloud between us which will be wholly dissipated by a few tears, or scattered to the four corners of the heavens by a single breath of God. And if we are not always in a religious mood, or in the active service of God, we need not grieve because our lives seem to have no high purpose.

Who serves Him more truly than a faithful mother, whether it be in tying baby's shoes twenty times a day patiently, or in teaching him "Our Father," on his knees with clasped hands by her side?

God places a higher value upon the little acts of every-day life than we do; and everything done to make the home neat and cheerful, is precious in His sight; and we are serving Him as truly in performing the work He daily gives us, as when we sing His praise, or teach in His name, or pray on bended knee. All day long there may

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be going up to Him the sweet incense of love, in patient well-doing, and we may have, with all our cares, the spirit of love and praise.

If we could realize the sacredness and magnitude of our work, if the wonderful mother-love could be always uppermost in our hearts, how it would lift us above our petty, wearing cares. How it would increase our tenderness and patience. If we could see in these troublesome, exacting boys or girls, angels of to-morrow, or next day, or next month perhaps, with what sweetness and tender yearning would reproofs be given ; for many who are our troublesome children to-day, ere another year rolls round will be our angel boys and girls in heaven.

Do not let the hurry and worry of life drive Christ out of your heart. Let Him come into the privacy of home. There is where He is needed most. There is where He likes best to be, close by us, to comfort and to bless us, and to lift from us our burdens. He was tired, so

tired often. And the whole world is tired. But there will come a long day of rest. Happy will it be for us then if we are tired to some good purpose. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here, as well as there, will He fulfil this promise. Precious rest in the bosom of Jesus, precious indeed the rest which comes to mind and body after work well done to His honor and glory, one smile of whom is worth more than the approbation of the whole world.

Then, mothers, do not be discouraged. The King of Heaven is on your side. However poor you may be, however humble your lot, you are queens, and home is your domain. Queens have many cares and burdens, and much responsibility. Their subjects do not always appreciate what is done for their good, and find much fault. But who in this world is appreciated? Even Jesus was not; and if He, the Son of God the sinless One, did not find this world smooth and

joyous, if He did not find love, appreciation, everything to His mind, need we expect to find it?

Ah no! Look to Him! Look away from your cares. Cast them upon Him! He came into the world to bear our burdens, and shall His life and death avail nothing to you?

God wishes you to serve Him just where you are, and not in some far-off, imagined condition or circumstance. The ways of serving Him are as varied and multiplied as the varied lives of thousands: We are not all called to be missionaries. We cannot all be regular attendants at the prayer-meeting, or the benevolent society. Some of us may be compelled often to absent ourselves from public worship. The world may judge us by our outward religious life, by the frequency with which we are seen in these places; but God looks on the heart, on the mind that is in us, at the patient, untiring love which makes sweet the home life.

Would we be so tired if we could realize that when we cheerfully and lovingly perform our allotted tasks, we are pleasing God? And if we are pleasing Him, what higher, more restful life can there be on earth? To please the Omniscient One, how wonderful the privilege. To be in harmony with His will each day, how delightful. No doubt we shall realize fully this blessedness in Heaven, but cannot we reach much nearer to it here?

There are thousands of hungry, sin-burdened and weary ones crying out with great longings and tears and reaching out after God, "We can, we can, we must, we will!"

And the answer sweetly comes from millions of angelic voices around the heavenly throne joining with the Lamb in crying, "Whosoever will let him come!"

Home, Sweet Home.

NEXT to the desire to serve God perfectly, a true man's purest ambition is to have a home, a loving wife, and dutiful children. Without a home a man is adrift in the world, and he never knows whither the rough and variable winds of fortune will carry him. A home is to him a haven of rest, a city of refuge, a sanctuary, a place where love reigns. Safe from all intruders, from all greed of gain, from all forms of selfishness and the unjust judgments of men, he is understood, appreciated, beloved. He is at home.

To a woman also is it a joy and highest honor to be queen-wife, and queen-mother in her own domain. "Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

There is nothing in life that brings more joy and comfort than a happy home. But while we surround it with beauty and poetry, and loving tenderness, we must not forget that we have something to do to create such a home.

Our homes are not sent down to us from Heaven. They are very earthly things, and largely what we make them. There is no relation so tenderly watched over by our Heavenly Father, as the home relation, but He does not interfere with our arrangements by any supernatural power. It is for the husband and wife to determine whether or not their home shall be to them and to their children all that a home can be.

In the first place, the marriage relation should not be entered into for any reason but that of mutual and enduring love. There are no circumstances which excuse a breaking away from this rule. No one should be so ignorant of what married life means as to hazard his life-long hap-

piness by a loveless marriage. The relation is too close, too sacred to admit of any reason for entering into it exclusive of this one. The discipline too unlike anything else one has experienced for him to pass through it unscathed unless love is the sceptre wielded in the home. Even then there are many misunderstandings and many hours of unhappiness before the two, unlike in temperament, with opinions which clash, and habits formed which they do not like to give up, can live together in harmony.

Many persons look forward to the first years of marriage as the happiest of their lives; and if they are disappointed, as they are almost sure to be, they conclude they have made a life-long mistake. They do not know that at first they are one only in sight of the law, and that it will require long years to make them one in reality, unless they begin their united life in a different manner from that which is usual. Strange as it may seem, in many instances husband and wife

are not together three days before unwise or unkind words have been spoken about something of little consequence. "I am right and you are wrong"; "My way is best, and you must conform to it," is the principle upon which they begin almost unconsciously a life which they expect to be bliss itself, and thus strife is engendered.

One likes to have the sunshine come into the house, the other cannot endure it. One wishes to have the curtains looped up, the other will have them hung without looping. One wishes to have the table in the middle of the room, the other will have it at one side. There are many trivial differences of taste and opinion of which they did not think before marriage, and they are surprised to find they are so unlike each other. And by reason of these differences they begin to go asunder, instead of becoming daily more closely united together

They expected everything in their home to ad-

just itself beautifully with no jarring. They love each other too well to have even a shadow come between them.* They do not realize how easy it is to be selfish, nor how imperceptibly the shadows fall. Neither have they any idea, until they have lived together a year or two, how many things must be yielded on the part of both or compromised between them; or how important it is that each one should be allowed individuality in character and life. It is by no means necessary to happiness that husband and wife should be alike. On the contrary they should be unlike; that what is wanting in one may be possessed by the other, that the two may make a perfect whole.

If they but knew these things, they would study from the hour of marriage to be magnanimous, and so avoid many mistakes and regrets. It is better to begin by making love a practical thing, than to cherish it as a mere sentiment. Practical love bears and forbears and covers a multitude of faults. It is patient and reasonable,

and is never oftener called upon to exercise its graces than in the first year of married life. Why not accept the fact and act in accordance with it? This is the only way to realize the happiness anticipated. Even then the first years are only the beginning of an always-growing fitness for each other, followed by increasing joy in each other and a more enduring love, so that the last years are the best.

Nothing is so much needed in the home as a careful deference to each other's wishes, especially in little things; but this must always be mutual. Too much generosity on one hand encourages selfishness on the other; too much yielding by one, a sort of tyranny from the other—so that the only safe way is for each to try to outdo the other in little acts of kindness.

If a husband wishes his wife to do anything for him, she should do it promptly; no matter how busy she may be with her own affairs—even though it be so trifling a thing as to mend a

glove or sew on a button. He has annoyances enough in his business. He should have his home and everything pertaining to it quiet and orderly. It is his right. And everything she can do to make it so, she should not only wish to do or intend to do, but do. Make the home bright and cheerful. Throw open the shutters. Let in the sunshine, and let it fill the whole house with health and gladness. Never mind the faded carpets and furniture. Sunshine is an absolute necessity in every home; fine carpets and fine furniture are not. Be sure that every detail of home is in accordance with common sense and the laws of health, no matter what others may say or do.

Don't be afraid of the kitchen. There is no sensible man living who will not be made happier and more comfortable by the knowledge that his wife at least attends to everything. And if she sometimes makes the bread or the coffee, it is all the sweeter to him.

A man likes to have his wife a natural woman. A woman of nature likes to be efficient, industrious, and domestic; and it is not for her neighbors or her friends to dictate as to what she may or may not do in her own home, and still retain her dignity as a woman. The false and unnatural idea prevalent that a woman cannot lift her hand to any sort of work even in her own home without degrading herself to the position of a menial, causes much discomfort and unhappiness in many homes.

Away with such notions! Away with such absolute folly! Young women, do not for one moment believe it. Be true women. Prepare yourselves to be helpful in the time of need, which may come at any hour. Keep your muscles strong and your minds healthy by taking exercise in your own homes.

If you do train Bridget and Susan and John so perfectly that everything goes like clock-work without your supervision, the time may come

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when you will be for days without John, or Bridget, or Susan ; and, unless you have the tact and the knowledge necessary to fall in and help fill the gap, the whole household will be thrown into confusion ; housekeeping will be declared unendurable, the remaining servants will be overworked and ill-humored, and things go on very badly because the mistress' delicate hands must not be soiled with work, and because it would be a disgrace to be seen with broom or duster in hand in one's own household.

A woman cannot be strong without exercise. She cannot be graceful and attractive without strength. Why not take exercise in a way to be useful ? Why not combine the useful with the beautiful in your life, as do the works of nature ? Cannot you fulfil your mission as perfectly as an inanimate tree ? Cannot you grow in loveliness and intelligence and at the same time make yourself indispensable to the household by actual service ? Work is not incompatible with the highest refinement.

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How much more honorable to spend your life in putting forth actual effort to some good purpose than to idly fold your hands to enjoy the comforts provided by the hard work and anxious care of your husband. Be efficient. Be helpful. Learn how to adjust things when they are out of joint. Learn how to cover up and smooth over things that will go wrong sometimes notwithstanding all your care. Make light of slight annoyances and mishaps. Be patient with your servants and your children. Keep absolute control of yourself.

It is a grand thing to be a noble woman. A woman cannot be noble without being symmetrically developed. Strive for that kind of development. Put forth your powers in every direction that they may grow by exercise. You do not know what influence you may have in your home, not in an open and demonstrative way, but by the purity and dignity of your life, and the quiet leading of true love.

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Let your first thought be for your husband's happiness, not in a servile way, because he demands it, but because he is more to you than all the world besides. Let interests outside of your home be secondary. Home first, always. That is your province. It rests largely with you to make it a happy home.

On the part of the husband there is much to be done that everything may go on happily.

If your wife does not meet your expectations in every particular, do not begin at once to try to make her over according to your own model. It is moderately certain she will not be made over. Be patient with her, and treat her in a manner to develop her best qualities; cultivate those things in which she is deficient by showing her how greatly they would add to your happiness, and by encouraging her to persevere in things which may be more difficult for her than you realize. You have not married a woman of experience. However excellent her training at

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home may have been, she is in a position altogether new and strange, and which demands much of which she has hitherto known nothing.

Be considerate and affectionate, helpful in little ways as every thoughtful husband knows how to be, and almost before you know it, she will be like the picture you had in mind of the sweetest woman on earth, and the most accomplished wife. Be careful not to find fault. Fault-finding and hasty words are out of place where love reigns. Keep your sweetest smiles, your most patient manner, the most noble expression of yourself for your wife and children. It is not easy to do this when you come home weary; but make the effort, and you will find yourself well repaid for it. See how quickly your wife's face will brighten and how thoroughly she will appreciate your endeavor to throw off your cares and enjoy your home.

Let every evening be even more delightful than those so highly prized in her society before

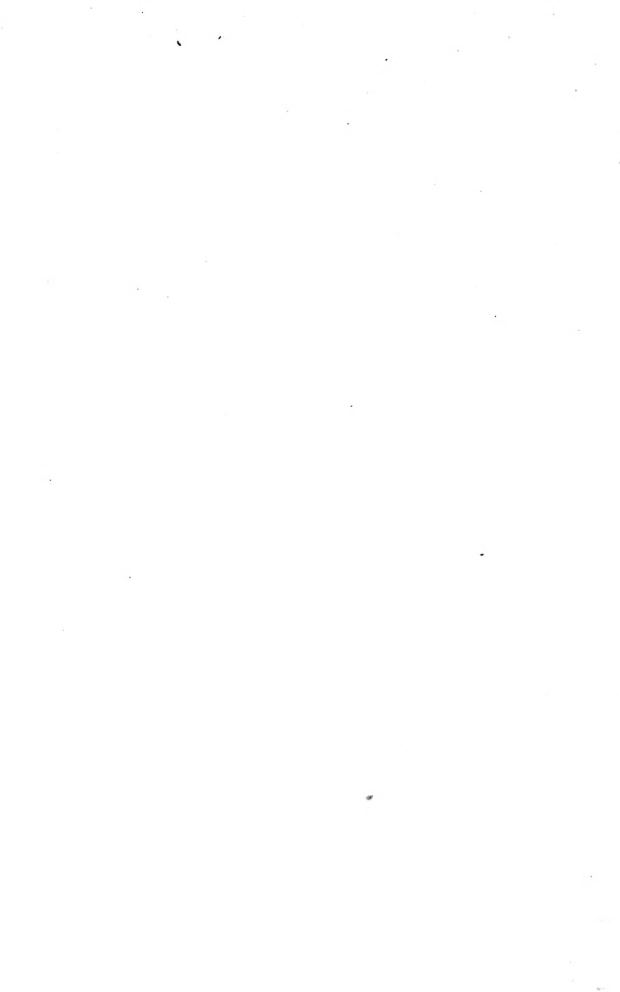
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your marriage. Have a romp with the children for half an hour before they go to bed. It will rest you and delight them. On no account bury yourself selfishly in a newspaper for the whole evening. Read aloud, if at all, while your wife darns the stockings and repairs the rent clothing of the children.

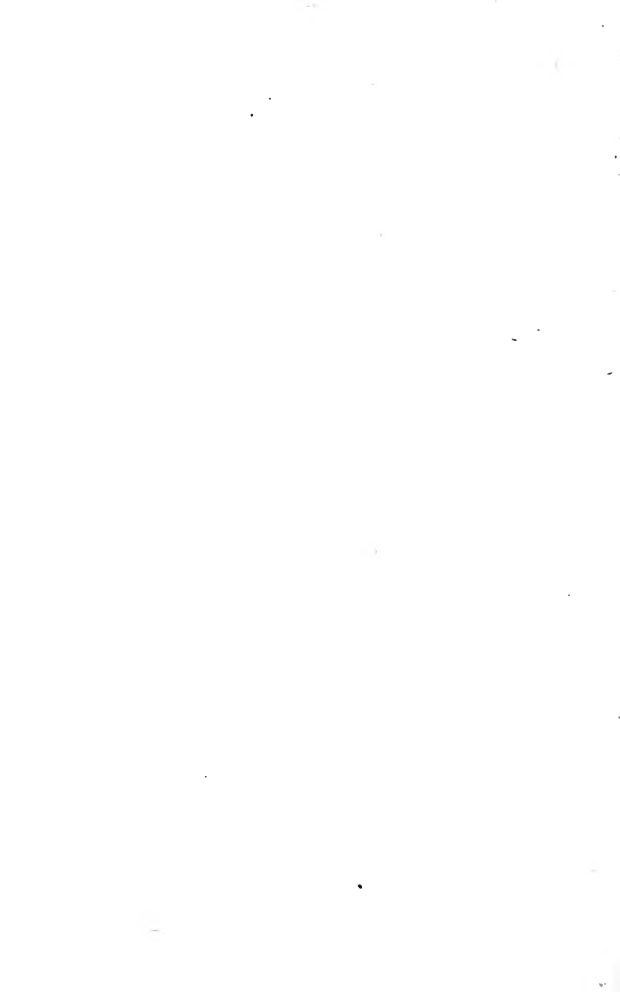
Share with each other your burdens and perplexities. It will make them easier to bear, and strengthen and purify your love for each other. Do not allow selfishness in any form to creep into your home. Teach the children early to seek the happiness of others before their own. With all the members of the household obeying the law of love, how happy will be the home, and how pure and strong its ties.

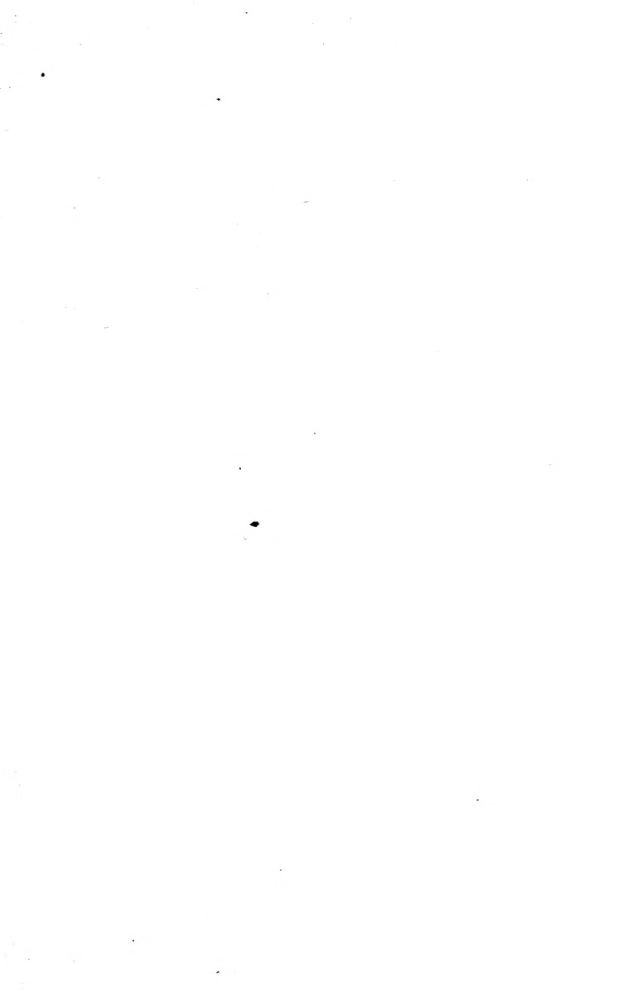
Let the family altar be erected early in the home, that God's blessing may rest upon it. For "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain."

All this may seem prosy, commonplace, and uninviting, especially to the young ; but why not look at things as they are ? Much of the unhappiness in homes comes from false estimates. That any discordant note should enter into the harmony of two souls whose bliss is heaven itself cannot be thought of for a moment. But life in all its phases is material, and is hard to be dealt with. And while we need all the poetry, all the romance, all the philosophy we can command to make life cheerful, we need far more the grace of God in the heart to fortify us against the surprises and disappointments which are sure to come at first, to be followed by a better understanding of each other, and a purer love which will bear and forbear with sweetness and patience
▼ “till death do us part.”









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