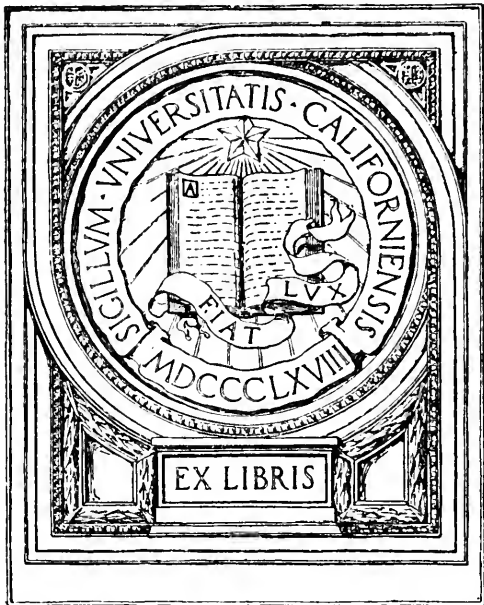


THE LIFE  
\* OF THE  
SPIRIT \*  
BY HAMILTON  
WRIGHT \*  
\* \* \* MABLE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



GIFT OF CAPT. AND MRS.  
PAUL McBRIDE PERIGORD

Mr. McBride,

March 31, 1901.

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THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT



*J. H. McBride*  
*March 1901.*

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HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE

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TO

GEORGE A. GORDON

“The race must become partner in the moral enterprise,  
fellow-worker with the universe at its ethical task, if its heart  
of rhythm and soul of fire are to stand fully revealed”



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# Life of the Spirit



## Chapter I

### Sunday Morning

**T**HE hush that falls on the fields and village streets on a Sunday morning in summer seems to announce the presence of the Spirit of God in some unusual sense. The activities of the world, its strife, its turbulence and passion, have vanished in the holy silence which rests upon the earth and makes it one vast and sacred place of worship. One instinctively recalls that beautiful phrase which always brings a vision of the rest of heaven with it—the peace of God: a peace which is not an armistice, but an eternal concord; not a forced reconciliation, but that deep and final

## Life of the Spirit

harmony which comes of complete unity of feeling and action; a peace which rests on the everlasting foundations of righteousness, and which is evidenced by harmony of purpose with action, of power with spirit. Our peace is often a brief cessation of struggle between the contending forces within us, or a little interval snatched from the contest with obstacles and adverse conditions which make our days arduous and our nights wearisome. But God's peace is the peace of final conquest, of lasting reconciliation, of complete adjustment. It is, when it rests on the early Sunday morning, a foretaste of the eternal repose; a repose not of inaction, but of perfect adaptation to tasks and joys, and of entire surrender of the will to the larger intelligence which makes it a force of growth rather than a force of self-assertion.

An old house has an atmosphere which cannot be carried into a new house. The walls have heard voices now gone silent; the halls have echoed footfalls no



## Sunday Morning

longer audible; the roof has protected a rich and varied life of joy and sorrow, of work and rest, which has passed on like a river into other countries and flows on under other trees and skies. But this vanished life has left its impress on the old house; has humanized it and overlaid it with all manner of sacred associations; so that, in a very real way, the old life goes on within the walls and keeps the old house still an old home. In like manner, the generations that have done their work and gone to their rest still live in the world which has passed out of their possession into ours; so that the great human family remains unbroken and continuous, and the fathers still touch the sons who have come into their places. We do not vanish from the earth like summer clouds that leave no trace behind; we work ourselves into nature and society, and leave something of ourselves in this home of our human experience. The vanished generations live with us and in us in ways past our

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knowledge ; we are born into the earth they have made fruitful by their toil, and the civilization they have builded like a great, invisible house over our heads. They have overlaid the world with associations which enrich and warm and humanize it ; so that, in a very true sense, the great spirits who have departed this life are still with us in the strife of our earthly days.

This continuity of historic life, this unbroken current of human action and emotion, this fathomless and silent stream of spiritual experience, become real to us in the peace of Sunday morning. For we are in touch, not with one short day plucked from the turmoil of the week, but with all the Sundays on which men have rested from their labours since time began. The day not only detaches itself, to our thought, from all working days, but unites itself with all the days of rest that have glowed and faded under these skies. In the sweet hush of the early hours, the trees untouched by the

## Sunday Morning

wind but vocal with the songs of birds hidden or flitting from branch to branch, the fields sweet and fragrant as if it were always morning, one becomes conscious of the unbroken succession of holy days which stretches away like a great highway to the very beginnings of history. Along that highway how many generations have walked with prayer and praise on their lips and with faith and love in their hearts! The fellowship of the good, the pure, and the aspiring becomes real to us in that thought, and we enter into the eternal communion of the saints. Divisions of time, differences of race, fade out of our sight; we feel the oneness of humanity, the continuity of the great human family, and the unity of life. So there enters into our thought the peace of one of those vast outlooks in which the fields fade into the landscape and the strifes and divisions of men are lost in a vision of their larger relationships. "The old Sabbath, or Seventh Day," says Emerson, "white with the

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religions of unknown thousands of years, when this hallowed hour dawns out of the deep—a clean page, which the wise may inscribe with truth, whilst the savage scrawls it with fetishes—the cathedral music of history breathes through it a psalm to our solitude.”

It is true that to the religious nature all days are holy and all places sacred, but we are immensely helped by fellowship and association; and the immemorial consecration of Sunday to rest and worship is, aside from all other things which set it apart from other days, a great aid to the life of the spirit. In the great crises of life one kneels in profound loneliness; but it is the loneliness of individual experience, not of individual destiny. We are all travelling the same road, though we are often so widely separated that we seem to be entirely isolated; we are all drinking of the same cup of sorrow, though it is often held to our lips when the wine of joy seems to be at the lips of others. Every man has

## Sunday Morning

his own hidden and incommunicable life with God, but this secret fellowship is a rill which flows into and swells the universal fellowship. We need to feel, not only the community of our needs and sorrows, but the community of our hopes and worship. We need not only our own silent hours and quiet places ; we need also the vast quiet of Sunday morning, the repose of universal rest and of immemorial worship. The calm of those fresh and fragrant hours is no figment of the imagination ; it is a kind of spiritualization of Nature ; it is a symbol of that peace of God which passes understanding. If we open our souls to its silent influence, it wins us away from ourselves into a sense of the universal life of man in God ; it frees us from the care and anxiety of our personal fortunes and takes us into the consciousness of an all-embracing beneficence ; it stills the waves of the shallow seas of our own emotions with the vision of that calm figure to whose feet the surging waters are as the

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solid earth. The quiet of Sunday morning, sweet with the breath of the meadows and the music of the birds, is sweet also with the presence of that peace which abides beyond our struggles, of that unbroken life and worship which banish our discords and divisions, of that divine seeking for God which all men have shared according to their knowledge, and which gives the sorrowful history of man a touch of divine beauty and prophecy.

## Chapter II

### The Religious Conception of Life

**I**T is impossible to define religion completely, but perhaps the nearest approach to an adequate definition is contained in the phrase, "religion is the life of God in the soul of man." These words go to the heart of the matter, for they detach the idea of religion from everything that limits it or identifies it with special rite, creed, service or knowledge. The emphasis rests where it belongs, on life; not on doctrine, organization, or particular revelation. Religion existed before the first sentence of the Bible was penned, before the first priest was ordained or the first church consecrated. It rests on none of these instrumentalities, although it uses all of them; it is older,

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deeper, and more comprehensive than any or all of them. It transcends not only all historical but all possible statements of doctrine. Confessions, creeds, and the Church are essential historical manifestations of the religious life of man; they are channels of grace and means of inspiration, instruction, and dissemination of truth; but they neither constitute nor compass religion. It was in the world before them, and its complete revelation will not be made until they have passed away. They are accommodations to man's infirmity and need; they are not of the essence of the truth to which they witness and of which they are the servants.

The real measure of the religious spirit in a man is not, as so many mediæval teachers believed, absorption in devotion and continual consciousness of sin; it is rather the keenness and completeness of one's consciousness of the presence of God in all things, and of the revelation of God through all things.



## The Religious Conception of Life

One often meets devout people whose sense of the presence of God seems to be almost entirely historic; they believe that God was with Moses and with the Israelites in their wanderings, and that over those wayward children and over their confused and painful journeyings a divine purpose presided; but in the world of to-day they see on every side the evidences of the activity of an evil spirit, and only here and there the evidences of a divine order and control of affairs. Carlyle, whose historic imagination was masterful, expressed passionately in his last years the longing that God would speak again! He could hear the divine voice speaking in the accents of Knox, Luther, and Cromwell; he could not hear it in the tones of Maurice, Stanley, or Bright. It seemed to him as if God had vanished out of human history when the rugged soul of Cromwell took its flight. There are hosts of devout people who believe in a past God, but who have very slight

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hold on faith in a present God. Older peoples seem to them to have been divinely led, their own people to stumble on blindly and in a helpless confusion of aims and ideals; other ages seem to them to have been sacred, this age seems devoid of divine recognition.

And God is not only limited in time, but he is also limited in the instruments which he uses. He made the Jews the channels of his revelation of himself, say many in attitude and spirit, if not in words; but the Egyptian, the Phœnician, the Greek, and the Roman worked out a purely human destiny in a purely human way. They had no inspiration from the divine spirit, and they accomplished no revelation of the divine nature. The history of the Jew is therefore sacred history, while the history of the Greek is profane history. It is as if one should discriminate between the children of the same family, and declare that one son bore the image of his father, had his love, and reflected his character, but that

## The Religious Conception of Life

all the others were aliens and strangers, cut off from participation in the nature which was a common inheritance, and in the love which had its indestructible root in the relationship, apart from all differences of gift or desert. Devout and self-sacrificing souls have believed in a little current of divine influence flowing through a sea of corruption, in a chosen people saved from a vast host disinherited and rejected ; but to a profoundly religious nature such a faith is to-day incredible. It is worse than a partial view ; it is a kind of atheism ; it sets about the divine love the narrow limits of the insight, intelligence, and capacity which restrict human affection ; it imputes to the divine nature the confused and provisional character of human motives.

And this limitation is imposed on God not only in matters of time and historical manifestation ; it is also imposed on the revelation of truth. God reveals himself, say many devout people, exclusively

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through the Bible and the Church! These, they say, are divine channels of communication; all other channels are human. It is as if, in forming our impression of a man's nature and life, we should take into account the books he has written and the manner of his worship, and ignore his way of living, his attitude toward his fellows, his conversation, his family and community life, his home, his dress, his manners! In forming our judgment of a man's life and character, we include all his activities, his habits, and his tastes; because, while certain things reveal him more distinctly than others, everything he is or does partakes of his personality and discloses it. The man is as much in his home as in his public utterances, as much in his selection of friends and his treatment of them as in his religious habits. In like manner, God is not only in the revelation of himself made through the lips of prophets and in the history and symbolism of churches, but also in the sublime house he has

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built for man to live in, in the laws which regulate man's life, and in the uses, the resources, and the possibilities of that life. God is as truly in nature as in the soul of the prophet, and truth of science is therefore as divine and authoritative as truth of Holy Scripture. God is also as distinctly revealed in human history as in vision and prophecy; indeed, a large part of the Old Testament is neither more nor less than current history interpreted from the standpoint of divine providence. The history of the last ten years contains a disclosure of the divine purpose as authoritative, if we have the prophetic soul to discern it. God is also in all forms of art, of thought, of true and wholesome activity. The material universe, the history, the life and the soul of man cannot contain the divine spirit nor complete its revelation. God is in all good things, although all good things together do not contain him. The divine spirit, says Clement of Alexandria, was poured first on the heads of the Jew-

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ish priesthood, and ran down thence even to the borders of the garments of Greek philosophy.

The measure of the possession of the religious spirit, from this standpoint, is the breadth and depth of a man's consciousness of God's presence and power in the world ; and the measure of a man's faith is his ability to realize God in the whole world about him ; in the forces and forms of nature, in the relationships and occupations of man, in the great and small movements of history. The mystic evades the tremendous difficulties which confront faith in the presence of the apparent contradictions and confusions of the world by withdrawing into himself and becoming absorbed in secret meditation ; forgetting that he who flees from the world confesses that the world is too strong for him. The ritualist limits the divine grace to a few channels, and gives up the other great courses through which the divine inspiration and strength flow into human lives. Both methods are

## The Religious Conception of Life

partial and divisive; and so far as they are partial and divisive they are tainted with atheism. They confess the presence of God in a few things, they deny it in many things. The root of all evil in theology, in worship, and in life is atheism. Our faith is too often like a tiny lantern held by a traveller in a dark night, which illumines a little path at the feet; it is not like a sun which lifts a whole world into light. The logic of the situation is inexorable: if there is a God, all things *must* reveal him, and all right activities and forms of life *must* flow from him and disclose his presence. To seize this great truth is to gain the fundamental religious conception of the universe, and of the life of man in it.

## Chapter III

### The Consciousness of Sin

**T**HE words which open the solemn invocation of the Litany have, at times, an awful meaning for all those who are sensitive to spiritual conditions. While it is true that the attitude of obsequious self-depreciation, which once found constant expression in hymn and prayer, is not only unwholesome but antagonistic to the highest conception of God and man, it is also true that they who know themselves know all the bitterness of sorrow and repentance condensed in the familiar words of the Litany; for, in the light of conscience, we are all, at times, in fact and thought, "miserable sinners." The consciousness of sinfulness and guilt has been shared by all aspiring and noble souls since time began; it has been expressed more or



## The Consciousness of Sin

less clearly in every religion ; it has been part of every religious experience. When races have lacked it, or religions have attached secondary importance and given subordinate place to it, the depths of experience have not been sounded nor the profounder meaning of religion grasped. The very exaggeration of the sense of sinfulness, to which both the mediæval Catholic and the more modern Puritan were so prone, bears testimony to the deep and abiding feeling of unworthiness which has not only been the heritage of all spiritually-minded people, but which is always developed in the individual when the spiritual life is awakened. Men have come to feel that whoever lacks the consciousness, not only of imperfect development, but of individual transgression, has failed to touch life at its heart, or to penetrate the profounder meaning of religion. The Cross remains the eternal symbol of the depth and reality of sin, not only in the world, but in the Christian consciousness.

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The distrust of the spiritual insight of the man who touches the subject with a light hand, who finds it easy to explain, or fails to find great significance in it, is well founded; for it is a law of the spiritual life that the finer and more complete the unfolding of that life becomes, the keener the sense of the tendency to sin becomes. Sin grows repulsive in exact proportion to the development of the spiritual nature. As the most awful penalty of transgression is not any form of external punishment, but the deterioration of the soul which offends, until it loses its sensitiveness to the real character of sin, so the highest reward of spiritual endeavour and growth is a constant uplifting of moral standards and a growing ability to look into the very heart of sin through all the disguises which it wears. Men are spiritually strong in exact proportion to their hatred of sin; the spiritual leaders and heroes know its hidden character; they loathe it, and they are in uncompromising and eternal enmity to

## The Consciousness of Sin

it. They do not need to be told that all forms of religion which ignore or touch it lightly are of necessity superficial and unspiritual; it is part of their deepest conviction that the greater the reality of religion, the keener and more constant the sense of the reality of sin. There was a profound meaning in the comment on Socrates which Matthew Arnold puts into the mouth of Carlyle, that he was too much at ease in Sion. A man who knows the world cannot be wholly at ease; he may have a deep repose of spirit, but he sees about him that with which he must wage relentless war. Repose we may possess even in the most arduous toil; ease we can never have while we are surrounded by conditions which are hostile to our highest life. For this reason Dante, notwithstanding a certain narrowness of temper, impresses the world as an essentially higher nature than Goethe, notwithstanding the immense breadth and productivity of the great German. Dante was not, it is pos-

## Life of the Spirit

sible, a wholly stainless man, but he came to see sin with a clearness which no other human soul has surpassed, and to hate it with all the intensity of his passionate soul. The "Divine Comedy" is very far removed from us in its forms and phrases, but the deepest impression we get from it is the impression of reality. Under the terrible light which Dante holds aloft in the Inferno, sin is no matter of imperfect development; it is an appalling and loathsome reality. Its hideousness becomes concrete in a thousand repulsive forms, and, its disguises all sternly stripped from it, we see its naked deformity and realize how corrupting, and unspeakably degrading it is.

The insight of the great artists, even when divorced from or indifferent to the moral aspects of life, has detected the secret nature of sin quite as unerringly as the insight of the men of spiritual genius. The drama, from the earliest to the latest times, abounds in expositions of its inherent corrupting and destructive power,

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overwhelming in their impressiveness. From the days of Æschylus to those in which Browning wrote "The Blot in the 'Scutcheon," the dramatist has told again and again, in every conceivable form, the tragedy of the transgressor. The penetrating genius of Hawthorne was continually searching the mystery, studying it from the side of inheritance, of personal responsibility and its reactive influence, and dealing with it always with a sincerity and subtlety which bore constant witness to the directness and authority of the vision brought to bear on some of the most terrible and elusive facts of human experience. In fact, fiction in its higher forms bears constant witness to the presence and reality of sin among men. Flaubert's masterpiece is, in its way, one of the most searching pieces of moral analysis ever made, and no one can read "Madame Bovary" without feeling the merciless accuracy with which the successive stages of moral disintegration are traced. In like manner, Zola has made

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the most appalling disclosure of the ravages of intemperance in "L'Assommoir." Such pictures as these, even when painted with repulsive frankness and in a cynical temper, bear unimpeachable testimony to the horror of sin even in the vision of the artist indifferent to definite teaching and intent only on seeing things as they are.

There is no better test of spiritual growth than increasing sensitiveness to the repulsiveness of all kinds of sin, and deepening consciousness of the constant peril from it in which every human soul lives. In the greatest saint there are all the possibilities which, being worked out, make the greatest sinner; and the truer the saintliness the deeper the consciousness of this fact. The materials out of which heaven and hell are builded are found in every life, and the man who slowly builds heaven within him has constantly the terrible knowledge that he has only to put his hand forth in another direction in order to build hell: both are within

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reach. But as a man builds heaven his vision of the infernal possibilities of life grows clearer, and his horror of wrongdoing becomes more constant and controlling. The disguises under which evil hides itself become more apparent, until the beautiful mask no longer produces even a momentary illusion; the hideous face is seen at a glance. When one has come to see sin as it is, and to loath and hate it, not for its consequences but for itself, one has gone a long way towards that final redemption from its power which we call salvation. But we are never saved until we have looked sin in the face and know that it is not only a terrible reality, but that it has touched the best of us with its defilement; and that, at some moment in our lives, the noblest of us must cry:

*O God the Son, Redeemer of the world;  
have mercy upon us miserable sinners.*

## Chapter IV

### Not Rejection, but Redemption

**S**ELF-DENIAL lies at the base of all noble living and of every form of noble activity; and no one attains to supreme moral excellence, or to a high degree of skill in any art or profession, without thoroughly subjecting impulse, inclination, and passion to the higher and finer ends towards which he moves. To excel in any craft or skill involves a clear and definite setting aside of many things which are at moments almost irresistible in their appeal to our desires and impulses; and it is quite as much by what he discards as by what he accepts that the worker evidences his mastery of his materials and his tools. Behind every great career there lies a denial of self of which the world knows nothing, unless it have the wit to discern



## Not Rejection, but Redemption

in the finished product not only the visible traces of skill, but also those invisible achievements of the will over self-indulgence of all kinds which give the heart courage, the spirit poise, and the mind clearness of vision. Behind noble productiveness in the arts there is a heroism of toil and consecration of which no trace remains save that perfection of line or form which is the last fruit of victorious striving. In like manner, the life of the spirit, if it be fruitful, luminous, and progressive, begins and continues in clear sovereignty of spiritual purpose over all confusing or diverting aims and impulses.

But self-denial is the beginning, never the end, of the true life of man. There are times, it is true, when to deny is more positive than to affirm, and to protest is the most courageous and effective way of announcing a new truth. The first followers of Christ, living in a society saturated with the spirit of paganism, confronted on every side by pagan

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forms, services, ceremonies, found their first duty in denial and protest. They could not live in amity with a social order which was at once corrupt and idolatrous. In whatever path they trod they found themselves face to face with customs to which they could not conform; every ceremonial in domestic, civic, or social life presented a sharp and definite issue between loyalty and disloyalty to the Master they served; and to deny and protest were the foremost duties laid upon them — duties which often meant the prison, the cross, or the awful show of the amphitheatre. In like manner, when society was full of rottenness and confusion, in the centuries when Christianity and paganism were locked in long and inevitable struggle, thousands of faithful believers found, or thought they found, safety and peace in separation from their fellows, and in lonely places practised a self-denial which became, to the imagination, a kind of exaltation.

## Not Rejection, but Redemption

But society has passed through transformations which have gone to the very centre of its structure; it is now nominally Christian; its formal observances, customs, habits and standards are Christian. He who follows Christ to-day does not confront pagan images and rites at every turn; wherever he turns he is face to face with the symbols of his own faith. Self-denial is still the necessity of his soul, but it is no longer the supreme evidence of the reality of his faith. It is the beginning, not the end, of his spiritual growth. It is a beautiful thing to keep one's self unspotted from the world; to resist its temptations, escape its snares, repel its attacks, and overcome its obstacles; but this, after all, is only the initial step of a deep, spiritual life. No man shines like a light before his fellows unless he does something greater than resist and escape the evil that is in the world; the great commander is on the defensive only by force of circumstances; his true line is

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the aggressive. It is his ultimately to lead, attack, and conquer, not to repel. There are moments when his first duty is to hold his own ; but the great movements and moments in his career are those which liberate his own powers and give play to his own constructive and creative genius. It is a noble thing to be clean in a society which is full of that which soils and discolours ; but it is a nobler thing to carry a contagious purity into vile places and to throw a white light into the encircling darkness. The noblest spiritual growth is not evidenced by that which it rejects, but by that which it redeems ; a man of low spiritual vitality may be content to hold his own, but a man of high spiritual vitality is driven by the very force of that vitality to mix with the widest movement of his time and take his stand where the great forces which move men converge.

Christ came not, like the master of a lifeboat, to pluck here and there a drowning man from the wide and desolate seas ;

## Not Rejection, but Redemption

he came to bring life, and to make it more abundant. He came not to witness to purity and righteousness by rejection and denial; that was the office of John the Baptist, and of all men of the ascetic type. Christ came to witness to the glory of God and the nobility of his works by redeeming that which man had corrupted, and restoring that which man had defiled. He came to take back from evil uses that which men, in their spiritual ignorance and weakness, had given over to evil so long that they confounded their own use with the very nature of the thing. Christ came, not to protest and deny, but to affirm and reveal. And the true evidence of the noblest following of his example is the demonstration that the world is the Lord's, and the clear revelation of the possibility of redeeming it by making noble use of it. The highest service of such a career as that which Phillips Brooks lived among men is the deepened sense which it gives men of the richness and beauty of life. Here was a

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man than whom none was more unspotted ; a man as clean and white as ever anchorite or ascetic kept himself ; and yet a man who kept himself in closest touch with all the great movements ; who loved travel, books, art, history, nature ; who valued humor, wit, eloquence, culture ; a man, indeed, to whom every phase of activity and every kind of expression were precious, because God was in all good things, and all good things revealed him. Here, clearly, the test was not completeness of rejection, but inclusiveness of acceptance ; not the ringing note of protest, but the full-voiced declaration of the glory of God in the beauty and uses of the world. In an earlier day and in a pagan society that voice, so full of passionate devotion to the things of the spirit, would have sounded the note of denial ; in this day it came freighted with a richer music.

For society is no longer in its spiritual childhood ; it has come to a certain degree of maturity. Its larger intelligence and

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its increased strength ought to be evidenced by bolder and fuller use of the things which God has fashioned; by a nobler thought of the world which God has made and redeemed. That he has made the world we are ready to believe; that he has redeemed it still seems incredible. We find it hard to believe that all society and every form of activity are by and by to declare his glory and reveal his purpose. But if this be not true, Christ suffered in vain. It was not for a fragment of life, a broken bit of time, a little section of the race, that he bore the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary. Out of that crucible of suffering there issued a power vast enough and deep enough to redeem all time, all men, all life. Slowly out of that inscrutable experience, and as the result of Christ's whole teaching, there dawns the vision of a world which is the Lord's in the fullness thereof; a world in which every activity, art, science, knowledge, culture, reveal the presence of the Lord and show forth his glory.

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The old struggle against temptation within and without goes on as it went on when David sinned and was sorrowful, and Peter denied and repented in the bitterness of that awful morning when his Lord was led to the crucifixion. That struggle lies in the experience of every man, and will be renewed in the unfolding of the life of the spirit to the very end of time. In the world there is contention, confusion, wrong-doing, and the tragedy of unrighteousness working out its ancient fruits of misery, remorse, and death. And yet, in spite of all these things — rather, through all these things — there slowly dawns in the religious consciousness the meaning of the great declaration that the world is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. As the Christ was veiled in the garments of the human child, and the glory of the Highest hidden in a manger, so the thought of God is written in every normal work of man's spirit; in every form of activity through which he pours himself upon the world;



## Not Rejection, but Redemption

in every art whose tools turn to the uses of beauty in his hands; in all knowledge, training, skill, and enlightenment. Through all these things God speaks, for these are the voices of man's spirit; voices often confusing and discordant, oftener pathetic and appealing; but always voices of that spirit which has borne many burdens, carried many crosses, worn many crowns of thorns, drunk many cups of suffering. The tragedy, the aspiration, and the divine sonship of man are in his works as truly as himself; God made him what he is, and his works are therefore the disclosure of God's purpose. Not until we read all true human activities and achievements in the light of this thought do we understand how the world is the Lord's, nor why Christ came not to deny and reject but to redeem and glorify.

## Chapter V

### The Christmas Vision

*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

**A** CHILD in his mother's arms, a company of shepherds on the hillside, and a sudden splendour of angels in the quiet night — could any grouping

## The Christmas Vision

of persons bring out more clearly the immense range of man's life and its wonderful possibilities! The manger for poverty of condition, the babe for the common helplessness, the shepherds for the drudgery of universal occupations — and, suddenly, in the night which had darkened the world a thousand thousand unremembered times, out of the old, familiar sky, the glory of heavenly faces and the unspeakable melody of angelic voices! So man has always lived, even in rags and sin, with the radiance of the sky over him; so every cradle has rocked a son of God; so every mother has held the child of God in her arms; so every common duty of common men has been an opportunity for heavenly revelation; so every night the glory of the invisible God has been but thinly veiled from the plains where grain ripens, and the hillside where flocks are feeding. The miracle is so wonderful and so familiar that men have never yet really believed that it has been wrought. A few in every

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generation have seen the splendour on sorrowful, suffering humanity; many have hoped and have said that they believed; but the great mass of men have never yet dared to live in the joy and peace which must come to those who believe that the world *is* the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Humanity will not accept its divine parentage, because it seems a fortune beyond its deserts; out of sheer consciousness of unworthiness, as well as out of spiritual dullness of vision, men doubt their heavenly origin and destiny. There is no more appalling evidence of the devastation wrought by evil in the soul of man than the fact that he still finds the promise of Christ incredible.

And yet every twelfth month the Christian world gathers round the manger at Bethlehem, and listens, in the stillness of the night, to hear the angels sing; and out of the windows, in the frosty air, it still seems to many, for a moment, as if there were a glow upon the snow and a

## The Christmas Vision

sudden splendour among the stars. Little children, pure in heart, look at the lighted tree and hear the familiar carols, and know that long ago, on the plain of Bethlehem, there came a sudden rush of melody down from the silent stars, with words few, beautiful, and loving, which men cannot forget, and they know that the shepherds really saw and heard. And their elders, crowded about them, are stirred in their hearts, and the beautiful old story lives again, and has its balm for pain and its sweetness for the bitterness of life. But when the morrow comes the glory has faded, and the world is gray and cold and sad. Men do not believe, because their own hearts do not justify a faith so simple, so transcendent, so divine.

The wonderful element in the story of the Birth is its perfect simplicity and naturalness. It deals only with the most familiar situations, it introduces only the most humble figures, it uses only the most elementary speech. The manger, the babe, the mother, the shepherd, the

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flocks, the quiet night, the few, simple words: could the divine drama have been put on a more unpretending stage, committed to more unskilled actors, employed a speech more common and readily understood? There is no selection of the places, persons and moments which seem to us noble, elect, significant; there, is on the contrary, entire disregard of all our distinctions of quality and differences of degree; life is taken in most common and homely aspects, man in his feeblest moment, witnesses in the humblest occupations, language in its most obvious and universal significance. And over all this obscurity, homeliness, and commonplaceness, behold! the splendour of God shines, and the manger is forever a place of pilgrimage, and the helpless child the mightiest force known among men, and the shepherds hear voices for whose music the great and wise have listened in vain, and the veil is rent asunder and the earth and the heavens are as one. There are no common men, there is no hope-

## The Christmas Vision

less drudgery, there is no forsaken world whirling through dreary night to a night still darker and to dreams more awful. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; and every birth is a miracle, every manger a holy place, every child a son of the highest, every occupation an education for immortality.

A divine Father, a divine Son, a divine world — so ran the meaning of the first Christmas day when angels broke their silence and declared the mind of heaven to earth; when the redeemed in their toil and the redeemed in their glory met for one brief but eternal moment about the manger, to prove that heaven shines on every birth, and that in every cradle a child of God sleeps and wakes.

Such a story must be incredible to all save the pure in heart. Little children do not question it; to them it is natural, historic, simple — as much a part of their lives as the love of parents and the comfort of home. For them the Star of Bethlehem is like every other star, and

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the wise men travel from afar because they are wise, and the angels sing because they are always singing; and for those who stand about them, and watch their bright faces and the light of the star in their eyes, they are not only the custodians of the Christmas story, but its revealers as well. The highest things are credible to those only whose lives respond to and fulfill them. To believe in Christmas and the truth which comes with it, borne on such splendour of common things, one needs not to study historic evidence, but to become as a little child in purity of heart. For the Christ in the heart recognizes the Christ in the manger.



## Chapter VI

### The Man Christ Jesus

**T**HE clear recognition of the normal human life of Christ is one of the great gains of modern religious thought. To his disciples, who felt the touch of his hand and heard the tones of his voice; to the little group of twelve, who often lived with him in the intimacy of the most familiar intercourse; to the throngs who waited to see him pass, or to hear those simple, beautiful, and searching talks — to all these Christ was never less than man, however greater than man. There was no confusion of two personalities in the thought of his contemporaries; no blurring of the clear outlines of a warm, vital, real human career; no substitution of a strange, un-human, incomprehensible personality in place of the son of Mary, who was

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born at Bethlehem, had gone up to the temple while yet a child and talked with the doctors of the law, had spoken in many places in Judea and Galilee, had died at Jerusalem as other men die, and been buried as other men were buried. All this the men and women who had become his followers knew about Christ; and to them he was as real, natural and normal a man as John, Matthew, or Peter. There was nothing abnormal about him, although there was much that was exceptional and unique; there was nothing phantasmal about him, although there were things which were incomprehensible.

Those who saw sight restored to the blind and life given back to the dead saw nothing strange or unnatural in the bearing of the healer, or incomprehensible and mysterious in his methods. Nothing could be in more striking and significant contrast than the simplicity with which Christ did the wonderful works which are called miracles, and the air of cheap mystery with which modern at-

## The Man Christ Jesus

tempts to use what are called supernatural powers or to produce what are called supernatural effects are surrounded. The sane spiritual mind, after witnessing one of these attempts, longs to get into the open air; nothing could be more unwholesome and spiritually repulsive than that mockery of spiritual intercourse miscalled the spiritual *séance*. From all that was abnormal, morbid, or spiritually unnatural Christ was as free as a great artist is from tricks of manner or a great nature from pretension. In his divinest moments Christ was unaffectedly and simply human in his aspect, expression, and experience; in those mysterious hours at the threshold of which thought stands reverent and abashed, all that a man may feel Christ must have felt, however much may have been added of experience beyond the ken of human kind. It was no unnatural and abnormal power which flowed from the touch and in the command of this quiet, sympathetic, tender-hearted teacher; it was rather the exaltation and sublimation of his natural

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force; it was the overflow of that spiritual vitality within him upon which the whole world was to draw. The healing, the feeding of the multitude, the raising of the dead, were marvellous and incomprehensible manifestations of authority over material conditions; but to the men who saw them these works must have seemed perfectly natural. One who really saw what was in Christ might have predicted them; they carried no element of surprise with them; for, from such an one as he, they might have been expected. They were as natural to him as walking was to Peter, or speaking to Paul. When one looks at these marvellous works in the immediate presence of the man who wrought them, they cease to be strange and difficult to believe.

When speculation began, however, to play about this wonderful personality, to separate it into faculties, to divide it into a dual nature, to mark the line between the human and the divine, then straightway the clear and beautiful figure of Christ be-

## The Man Christ Jēsūs

gan to loom strange and mysterious in the thought of Christendom. In losing the sense of the reality of his human nature and life, men lost closeness of touch, intimacy of feeling, frankness and simplicity of fellowship with him ; he receded from their view, the outlines of his face became shadowy, the tones of his voice seemed remote and alien ; the memory of his works was suffered to surround the worker like a magical veil through which mortal eyes must not strive to look. He who had lived, so to speak, in the open ; who loved highways, the seashore, and the places where men gather, no less than mountain solitudes and desert places ; who ate at family tables, used homely speech, cared for little children, and spoke intimately to fallen women, gradually withdrew from the near gaze of men into the infinite distance where God was exiled from the world he had made, and became himself a kind of second divinity ; more tender than the father — had he not human memories and as-

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sociations?—but still far above the touch of human hands and the sound of human voices.

But man must needs have the love of man and the sympathy of man, and so it came to pass that, as Christ slowly climbed the steps of the white throne and took on the ineffable majesty of the Godhead, the tender, sorrowful face of the virgin mother grew more and more distinct and beautiful in the thoughts of men. There must be some one nearer God than themselves, and yet like themselves in need and memory and hope, to whom they could speak; some one who understood their experiences and spoke their language. And so it came to pass, out of the deep necessities of the human soul and the human life, that Mary became the intercessor between her own son and his human brothers; and the Christ who died for his brothers, and who, in dying, pardoned those who smote him, vanished, in a way, out of the life he lived and the world he had redeemed.

## The Man Christ Jesus

In the history of human thought few things have been more strange or pathetic than the loss of the sense of the reality of the humanity of Christ ; for no revelation was ever more complete than that which set the figure of the man Christ Jesus in the crowded highways of the world.

The difficulty of believing in the interpretation of life which the great spiritual teachers have always given lies not in the interpretation but in ourselves. There are moments in which we know that life has all the glory with which it has been clothed by prophet and poet. We need no demonstration in these hours of exaltation ; we see with our own eyes. On the mountain summit no one doubts the great sweep of landscape, beautiful and benignant to the curve of the blue horizon ; but when we descend and the view fades, and skies are low, and mists hang close about us, we begin to forget, to question, and to reject. Noble men, unspoiled by misuse of a good world, know that life is noble ; evil men know

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that life is evil: have they not made it so? In our uncertainty of thought about God, our uncertainty of moral action, our manifold and oft-repeated failures to do what we want to do and live as we ought to live, it seems incredible that Christ really was and is one of us — one, that is, in complete knowledge of our experience, needs, and sin, in complete sympathy and in immortal fellowship. We do not believe it because we are not good enough to believe it; we doubt it because we feel unworthy of it. And so, forgetting that it was this very condition in ourselves which brought Christ to us, we suffer him to recede into the distance, and lose the divinest experience which can come to us. Sharing that divine nature which lays the burdens of the weak upon the strong, the sin of the impure upon the pure, the need of man upon God, Christ must come to us; being bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, he must likewise know us, suffer and die for us, and live immortally with us.



## Chapter VII

### Half-Truths and the Truth

ONE of the most difficult duties laid upon a man is the balancing of his life between what appear to be antagonistic tendencies. That this is a duty is evident from the gravity of a failure to secure this balance. All ill-balanced character, extravagance of opinion, excesses of energy, tragic wastings of force, and the vast majority of those eccentricities which betray a distortion of nature, come from the failure to harmonize the diverse tendencies which are in every man's heart and the diverse forces which play through every man's life. It is impossible to give one's self up wholly to anything without spiritual loss ; even the pursuit of the highest virtues and the noblest ends becomes an occasion of

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weakness if these virtues and ends are thrown out of their normal relations to the whole order of life. In order to attain deep spirituality of nature one must, in a sense, be separated from the world; and yet no man can attain his full stature or greatly serve his fellows who is detached in fact or in feeling from the human brotherhood. One cannot compass the richest spiritual growth or attain the widest spiritual vision if he is *of* the world; neither can one secure either of these great ends unless he be *in* the world. In order to lead his fellows one must attain the independence of the great teachers whose wisdom has always been the knowledge of God; but no one can touch the hearts of his brother men and guide them into higher paths unless he is so completely one with them in all the deeper experiences that he secures also the wisdom of the knowledge of man.

The ball of the earth, like all the other stars that shine in the firmament, is in perpetual danger of flying into its sun or

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of rushing into space ; and man, who lives on this flying ball played upon by two apparently antagonistic forces, must lose his life in order to save it, deny himself in order to be happy, and give all that he possesses in order to be permanently rich. If he hoards, he wastes ; if he guards himself against sorrow by keeping his affections at home, he impoverishes himself ; if he strives to escape the dangers of life by keeping out of the path of the tragic experiences, he invites inevitable disaster. At maturity he is told, if he longs to serve God, that he must be born again ; in old age he is taught, if he longs to know God, that he must become as a little child. The structure of his own nature seems to affirm that the highest wisdom is the exclusive possession of those whose minds have had the most complete training, and in whose memory knowledge has found the amplest home ; and yet it is written that out of the mouths of babes God has ordained wisdom, and in the hearts of

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the poor and humble there is a light above the light of knowledge. When the Infinite took on the conditions of mortality and became a man, his place of birth was obscure, his parentage humble, his education slight, his divinity veiled by the lowliest aspects of humanity. The greatest of the apparent contradictions of life is the fact that God has led a human life ; and Christ himself was a greater paradox than any of the paradoxes he uttered.

In whatever field a man walks, he finds himself confronted and surrounded by these strange and confusing contradictions. He has a deep instinct for order, and yet he is born into a society full of the elements of disorder ; he has a love of beauty, but he is encircled by ugliness in a thousand forms ; he has a passion for freedom, but if he follows his own desires and surrenders to his own impulses, chains of habit are fastened upon him which are like bands of iron ; and he does not need to study long in the school of life to discover that the only

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road to liberty is through obedience, and that he who would be a master must first be a servant. And this is only the beginning of that education which seems to reverse all the first impressions of the normal order of things. For the man learns not only that the earth turns toward the sun instead of the sun rising upon the earth, but that the small things are great, and the great things small; that the sublimest duties are often the humblest in appearance, the noblest opportunities often the most insignificant at the first glance, and the loftiest natures the most unassuming. If he would be great, he must first become simple; if he would lead his generation, he must be its foremost servant; if he would uncover the beauty of the world, he must find the shining of that beauty close at hand and in the most familiar objects; if he would discern the significance of life, he must invest the commonest persons and the most obscure conditions with the dignity of divine purpose and love.

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Is life, then, as some men have told us, an unintelligible paradox, a vast and fathomless irony? Is it true that, as Omar Khayyám has said,

We are no other than a moving row  
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go  
Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held  
In Midnight by the Master of the Snow?

The paradoxes of life have their root in our ignorance; they are the result of our half-knowledge dealing with half-truths. The moment a man comes to understand the order of the solar system, the sun no longer seems to revolve around the earth; and the moment a man discerns that this earthly experience is part of an endless life, that he is open to heavenly as well as earthly influences, that behind the apparent order there is another and a spiritual order, mystery remains, but confusion and contradiction vanish. There is no more irrationality in teaching a man a spiritual lesson through a sorrow, a loss, or a sacri-

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fice, than in teaching a child a fact or truth which is still beyond the range of its full comprehension. All real education is in advance of the mind's power of entire appropriation at the moment. The mature man no less than the child is always learning things which he does not perfectly understand, but which he will understand when experience has widened or deepened or ripened his nature. If by self-surrender one can secure pure and lasting freedom, there is no paradox in the giving up of the lesser for the greater good ; if by losing his life a man can save that which is of more value than life, there is no jugglery with his intelligence in the process. The moment one discerns the spiritual order behind the apparent disorder, there are no longer any paradoxes ; the apparent contradictions resolve themselves into harmonious adjustment as soon as one overlooks the entire field. There is no real antagonism between the force which impels the earth towards the sun and that which impels it

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towards the abysses of space; they are different manifestations of the same force. In a shop one often sees two belts running in opposite directions, but he has only to climb a pair of stairs to discover that a single belt is running over the drum! The earth is not solitary; it is part of a system, and can be understood only when it is so regarded. Man is not perishable, but immortal; the things which surround him are material means to spiritual ends, material symbols of spiritual truths; life is not identical with its forms and appearances and conditions; it is divine and it is eternal.



20-7  
10-2-6

## Chapter VIII

### Repose in Work and Strife

**T**HERE are few things in human history more pathetic than the search for repose — that well-nigh universal quest which has taken many forms and suffered many defeats, but has never been abandoned. In the sense in which most men have imaged repose to themselves, and in the places in which they have looked for it and the methods by which they have sought it, this search has been, from the first, as hopeless as the search for the fabled fountain of youth. For many generations to imaginative souls that fountain was a reality beside which most things at hand were unsubstantial and valueless. The sound of its waters, in ears that were growing dull with time, was a music the melody

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of which was beyond the reach of strings and keys. The ends of the earth were not too far to hush the music of its fall ; nor were perils of unknown seas and dangers of untravelled continents too great to chill the heart set on the recovery of the perishable bloom of youth. No one can read the story of that hopeless quest without feeling anew the penetrating irony of life. Those musical tones were always falling on the ear of the imagination, which never grows old ; but to the body, which perishes from the hour of birth, they are forever soundless. Sacrifice, courage, endurance, suffering, and death could not bring within the reach of those ardent spirits that which never had existed and never could exist. It was a quest foredoomed to defeat, and the more eagerly it was prosecuted the deeper the pathos which invested it.

In like manner, with kindred toil and sorrow and self-denial, men have sought for the repose which is complete rest, entire cessation from struggle, perfect

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harmony between the spirit and its possessions, occupations, and achievements. In the throes of strife they have expected the calm of final peace; in the heart of the storm they have looked for the fragrant silence of summer fields warm under summer skies; in the weariness of apprenticeship they have anticipated the poise and power of the master; in the ignorance of the primary school they have thought to find the ripe knowledge of the scholar; in the long, painful unescapable process of living they have tried to grasp the fruits and enjoy the repose which will lie in the hand only when the doors of the school have been closed forever. The repose which they might have had they have often passed by; the repose which has never yet come to man — which was denied even to Christ so long as he wore the form and lived the life of man — they have sought with tears and prayers, with fasting and scourging, with every kind of penance and sacrifice.

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They have fancied that this repose was a matter of conditions, and so they have separated from their fellows and gone out into desolate places, seeking peace in deserts and cañons and solitudes. And when they were pursued by the temptations which beset them at home, they renewed their vigils and doubled their stripes and cried out to God in the bitterness of despair. Few figures are more pathetic than those of the Saint Anthonys who have found no place too remote for the tempter, and no seclusion too closely guarded for those temptations which may find their occasion in the conditions which surround a man, but which find their opportunity and their material in that nature from which he cannot separate himself. In lonely cells, in crowded convents, in pilgrimage and crusade, in the quiet of cathedral close and in the rush and stir of great movements, one truth grows more and more clear: that the repose of perfect harmony between the spirit and the things which now are is

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impossible, and that the repose into which men may now enter is to be found, not in conditions, but in heart and character. The long, pathetic search for repose in changed conditions, in external penances, in outward self-denials, was fore-doomed to failure from the beginning. But it has been, for the most part, entirely sincere; and, like all sincere effort, it has borne its fruit. God permits nothing to be wasted into which the hearts of men are poured, or in which the aspiration of the struggling spirit shines; what is lost in effort is constantly saved in knowledge and character. The vain seeking has brought the fruits of discipline and sorrow; and it has brought also the knowledge of that repose which God offers to all who are willing to accept it.

The most devoted father cannot, by any inspiration of love, spare his child the long training of education; the necessity for that training lies in the nature of things, and there is no escape from it. More than this, there ought to be no

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escape from it; for in its results lie the strength, peace, and joy of the perfected life. There is no way to the writing of the great book, the painting of the great picture, the doing of the great deed, save the way of patient learning, of honest drudgery, of long-continued concentration of time and toil to one remote end. In that long discipline the spirit often faints and the heart rebels against restrictions which seem to be a hopeless bondage. To young men of real talent there often comes an unrest which is like the bitterness of death. The spirit longs for free expression, and finds itself shut in on every side by enforced tasks; the imagination is in a tumult of undirected energy and passion, but the hand is tied to the drudgery of the school. It seems as if ease and repose were to be had by breaking through all restrictions and bringing one's thoughts into direct contact with the material which must give them form. Many have followed this blind impulse, and learned too late that

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power flies out of the window when rebellious desire takes the place of self-denying discipline. Rest in the arts comes not to him who seizes it, but to him who grows into it by growing into mastery of himself, his tools, his materials, and his imagination. The splendid freedom of a Rembrandt, so full of the rest which is born of the consciousness of power, was won, not by a bold dash, but by infinite patience and toil.

The rest which comes from perfect achievement was never yet won in the struggle of life; but there is a rest which comes from adjustment to present conditions, acceptance of present limitations, and victorious recognition of the far-off peace. That rest is not only within the reach of every one who strives for it but it must be won if one is to secure the results of the long struggle. The private soldier may lose his calmness in the thick of the fight without inviting disaster, but the commander who becomes disturbed, agitated, anxious, puts himself in the

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way of crushing defeat. Absolute coolness of temper must reinforce the highest genius. In every kind of work which exacts the highest energy and skill, in every phase of experience which requires clear thought and resolute action, in every moral crisis which demands sanity, self-control, and self-restraint, the secret of a victorious deliverance or achievement lies in a spirit of repose. To have a quiet mind is to possess one's mind wholly ; to have a calm spirit is to command one's self. For action, therefore, as well as for peace, for achievement as well as for happiness, a man must learn to carry repose on the march, to keep it in the struggle, to rest in it in the long toil of life. In the vision of spiritual mastery the brave fighter and the patient worker often catches a glimpse of the repose of a gift perfectly trained, a work entirely done, a struggle finally won ; let him open his spirit to its reflection in the hour of his toil and temptation.



## Chapter IX

### Revelation through Character

**I**T is quite impossible to drop the plummet of thought to the bottom of the word character; so deep and so manifold are the meanings of this highest and most enduring of all the aspects of human life. There is, however, one function of character which is rarely fully taken into account, and yet which is, in some respects, its divinest office: the function of revelation. The noble characters in each generation are the prophets of God. It matters little whether they are gifted with speech or not; there is an eloquence in their spirit, their aims, and their lives, which no language can compass. Speech is effective and convincing only while it is audible; character makes golden tongues out of

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silence itself. It was said of a jurist of great force and learning, who was on trial for professional misconduct, that while he was speaking the charges against him seemed to have no weight; but when he sat down they instantly became damning again. So long as he could speak he could influence his fellows, but when he ceased speaking he had no character to plead for him. His genius could not overcome the disclosure of what he really was, which his character unconsciously conveyed.

Hume said that when he thought of his mother he believed in immortality; there was that in her character which he could not reconcile with final dissolution. The supreme and convincing witnesses to the great truth of the endless life are the good, the pure, and the self-sacrificing, whose aims and spirit are so harmonious with eternal life that they are inexplicable without it. They bring eternity with them, and make time seem a part of it. Their whole dealing

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with life involves its continuity; and there flows from them a stream of faith. Righteousness is never so real as when it finds its illustration in a human life. Many a man *knows* that righteousness is immutable and sovereign in this world because he remembers what his father was. The momentary successes of bad men and corrupt methods do not for an instant confuse one who has been in close touch with a pure and true human soul; a soul which was not only unpurchasable, but which made the barter of principle incredibly mean and base. One righteous man confutes all the specious arguments against the supremacy of righteousness in this world; such a man makes it clear that righteousness is not only sovereign, but that it is the only reality.

And character is not only a disclosure and confirmation of righteousness and immortality; it is also a revelation of the spirit and methods of God. There is no higher function which a human

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soul may take upon itself than this: to make men see and love God. It imparts to those who rise to its opportunities a sanctity and beauty past all power of speech to express. In countless households there are women who are patiently, in sweet unconsciousness of their saintly service, spelling the ways and mysteries of God in words so simple that he who runs may read. Year in and year out in these blessed homes God becomes real, near, and divinely compassionate through this silent revelation of character. Character, it has been well said, is salvation; and it is salvation not only for ourselves but for others. We are saved by the character of others, because that character breeds character in us. There are many to whom God seems afar off; they do not doubt him, but they cannot lay hold of him as a companion in the hour of need. To such natures it is a blessed providence when some human soul becomes a translator and revealer of that

## Revelation through Character

Divine Helper who has not yet become a Divine Father in the thought and feeling of a weak and sinning child. Human love becomes in this way the prelude to divine love. For we hold fast to the mother or wife whom we love; we long to gain and keep her confidence; we do the things that please her, and we leave undone the things that distress her; we harmonize our lives with her life out of pure love of her. Unconsciously to ourselves, we are also conforming our lives to God's will, because we are shaping them after the pattern of one of God's holy ones.

There is more, however, than the steady striving to give our lives the order which another loves; there is a constant breaking in upon us of a deepening consciousness of God. A beautiful human soul always suggests God, as the shining in the still waters at night makes us instantly aware that a star is above us. We do not need to look at it; we know that it is there. Whoever

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in this confused world has the supreme blessedness of living close to a beautiful human soul cannot look into the pure depths of that soul day after day without a constant vision of God. In such a relationship, to one who gradually enters into it, there is not only a growing purification, but there is also a deepening reverence; a consciousness, becoming constantly more distinct, that one is living near a shrine and that a human fellowship is silently becoming transformed into a divine fellowship. Human love can bring to one who evokes it no higher tribute than this consciousness, nor can it take on any higher form or manifestation than this revelation of the divine love. When it rests here, it seems already of heaven rather than of earth, and it carries in its heart the assurance of its own immortality.

## Chapter X

### The World of Divine Opportunity

**N**OTHING in human experience is more significant or more beautiful than the gradual transformation of things, persons, and experiences at first slighted or passed by as common and uninteresting into things, persons, and experiences noble and inspiring. The young world dreamed of its Christ as coming in majesty of form and clothed with all the visible signs of sovereignty ; but the Christ came in guise so humble and in conditions so obscure that they only discerned the divinity who had caught the great truth that in the human the divine is veiled and hidden. The young soul, ardent, generous, and aspiring, dreams of the great tasks and the noble opportunities at the ends of the

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earth, or on some splendid stage; and finds, years after, that the task was close at hand, and garbed so meanly that it seemed but another of the weary commonplaces of daily life, and that the opportunity was, at the moment it presented itself, only a homely and familiar chance to work. The man of experience learns to judge nothing by its outward show; he has seen the bravest promise of greatness turn to bitter disappointment, and he has seen the poor, shabby door swing open upon a noble career and a rich and bountiful life.

No stories are so enchanting to the young imagination, dreaming of things to come, as those which narrate the swift or slow advancement to fortune, position, and reputation from meagre and unpromising beginnings. Every man who, unaided by family influence or fortune, makes his way to the front by honourable industry and well-directed ability, is a hero in the eyes of youth, — a hero who has sustained the test of manhood, met



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the conditions of worthy success, and passed victoriously the obstacles which lie in every path to fortune. Whenever such a man tells the story of his success, he reveals the qualities which have brought him influence, reputation, and prosperity, and demonstrates again the familiar truth that a man's fate lies in his character and not in his conditions ; that heroic resolve, unshakable purpose, and courageous devotion are not at the mercy of accident and the caprice of circumstances, but work their way and their will to the victorious end. When the story of such a life is told, the eternal romance of all noble striving pervades it ; that romance which shines upon the world in the eyes of each succeeding generation of youth, and which draws every ardent spirit with irresistible insistence. For the promise of life, intelligently understood, is never broken to those who are willing to meet the conditions of its fulfillment ; it is broken only to those who misread it or who fail to stand the tests

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which it imposes. The romance of the successful career lies in the contrast between its meagre promise and its noble achievement,—between the materials with which it had to deal and the imperishable uses to which those materials have been put.

The old stories which, like the “Arabian Nights’ Tales,” dealt with magical forces and magical effects wrought by the swiftest means, have not only enchanted the children of the world, but have crudely illustrated the truth that man is greater than his conditions and has a magical power of transforming them. For the secret of magic lies in the disparity between the means used and the ends attained. Investigation of universal elements has released more genii than ancient magicians ever set free, and modern study of nature has made the old wonder tales, which were fashioned in the world’s childhood, tame and commonplace. But the magic used by intelligence in dealing with things is not so

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impressive as the magic with which intelligence transforms conditions in the working out of human lives. The story of such a career as Edison's is more wonderful than the story of his discoveries and inventions, although the latter are an authentic modern Arabian Nights' Entertainment; while the career of Lincoln, when one compares the poverty of his youth with the majesty of his service to the race and the splendour of his world-wide fame, is more marvellous than any tale of magic ever recited to eager listeners in Bagdad or Damascus.

So manifold is opportunity, so open is the road of the higher success to ability, industry, and character, that human life may be fairly described as a divine chance to do and to be that which lies in the imagination of youth. God does not deceive the fresh, instinctive faith of childhood; life does not lie to those who trust its promises. It is commonplace only to those whose natures, tastes, and aims are commonplace. To those who

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have eyes for what Carlyle so well called "the open secret," life is often severe, painful, and even tragical in its happenings ; but it is never less than great ; and that it shall be great in its ultimate possibilities is all that we have a right to ask of it. If the world was fashioned by intelligence and the conditions of life were divinely ordered, the element of magic, of chance in the noble sense, ought to play through human experience ; doors ought to open on all sides ; paths ought to lead from all points. So Edison finds his way from the selling of newspapers to the study of the most wonderful and elusive of natural forces, Lincoln rises out of the hard surroundings of the old frontier life to one of the loftiest places to which the foot of modern man has climbed, and the draper's assistant goes from the dull life of the shop to that watching of morning skies which left its imperishable record on the canvases which bear the name of Corot. It is a veritable magical world in which we live, because such

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tremendous consequences are folded up in such apparently unimportant acts, such wonderful growths are hidden in such tiny and insignificant seeds, such splendid opportunities constantly present themselves in garbs so mean. The real value of things lies in their spiritual possibilities, and these possibilities are hidden even from the wise and prudent. The children are, after all, wiser than their elders, because they are willing to take God at his word and accept the world as something magical and divine — a true wonderland of the soul, in which all manner of transformations of the ignoble into the noble and of the humble into the great are constantly taking place.

## Chapter XI

### The Hills of God

**T**HE story is told of a teacher in a little school in the Highlands of Scotland, about whom the terrified pupils gathered during a terrific storm, and whose radiant face led one of the children to ask why she smiled. "Because I love to think that it is my God who thunders," was the reply. There was a time when most men dreaded the deep mountain valleys and the lonely mountain summits: but a larger knowledge of Nature, born not only of fuller investigation but of deeper love, has wrought a revolution of feeling, and men flee to the mountains to-day as to the fastnesses of the spirit, finding in their solitude and majesty a new sense of the nearness of the Infinite. In all times men of religious genius and aspiration have sought in

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the silence of the hills places of adoration and communion for which the crowded streets of cities made no room. To be alone with God one must separate himself at times from men. It was on a lonely mountain summit that one of the greatest spiritual leaders who has yet appeared heard and recorded those words in obedience to which individual and racial characters reach their highest levels; it was in a solitary place that Christ fought in lonely vigils that battle with temptation from which he returned sinless and victorious to be the Saviour of the race; it was in another solitude, more tragic and desolate, that he drank the final cup of suffering and made ready for the supreme sacrifice.

Nature has many aspects, and God is behind them all; but the mass and grandeur, the vast solitudes and deep recesses in the heart of the hills, are, in a peculiar sense, the inner shrine where He waits for those who come, worn and confused, from the noise and strife of

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the world. Here the sounds of man's struggle are lost in His peace; here the fever of desire and the agitation of emotion are calmed in His silence. The great hills, purple with heather or green with moss, rise peak beyond peak in sublime procession; the mountain streams run dark and cool through dim and hidden channels, singing that song without words which is sweet with all purity and fresh with the cleanness of the untrodden heights. Through the narrow passes one walks with a silent joy, born of a renewed sense of relationship with the sublime order of the world, and of a fresh communion with the Spirit of which all visible things are the symbol and garment. The tranquil lakes gather into themselves a beauty which speaks to the innermost soul and liberates the imagination for that insight and vision which, in distant places and amid alien sights and sounds, are to bring back the peace of this silent world. Under fair skies the clouds drift over the summits, and lay their fleeting



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shadows softly and tenderly on the distant slopes. On dark days the mists gather in the uplands, roll down through the higher valleys, and sweep in endless procession across the landscape, concealing and then revealing a new and wonderful world, in which earth and sky are magically commingled. Through these parting and closing clouds — summits wrapped in soft draperies until they are like peaks of submerged continents, and then silently reunited as if a new earth were making — the mountains gain their most mysterious and impressive beauty. Then the rain begins to fall gently on the far slopes, steals like a vast veil across the valleys, blurs the sharp outlines, and blends the whole scene in a soft and subdued harmony of form and colour and atmosphere.

One remembers that these same hills have been the fastnesses of the persecuted and the suffering; that here some of the loftiest heroisms in the history of the race have been enacted. In lonely defiles and

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on secluded stretches of moss overlooking the mountain passes the Holy Communion has been taken by those who counted life of no worth if the faith might be kept. The place seems made for such heroisms, and, even in these gentler days when men no longer suffer death for the right to worship in their own way and according to their own consciences, one feels that such martyrdoms are still possible. And this is perhaps the greatest service which the hills of God render to him who seeks them with an open mind and heart. Their grandeur silently dispels one's skepticism in the possible greatness of man's life. In a world where such heights rise in lonely majesty, the soul, to which they speak with voices so manifold and so eloquent, feels anew the divinity which shapes its destiny, and gains a fresh faith in the things that are unseen and eternal. From these summits the clouds no sooner gather than they fall apart, and the heavens are serene and calm and full of unsearchable splen-

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dour. Not even the stain of blood can remain here; and the fury of the storm is forgotten in the deeper music of the streams which it has fed.

Here, amid the hills, the sublime thought of eternity broods like a mist which gathers far beyond the vision of man and sweeps silently down to nourish the low-lying fields and carry plenty to countless granaries and food to the throngs in distant cities. Out of the heat and dust of those cities one comes back to these reservoirs and fountains of fresh verdure and exhaustless fertility; out of the skepticisms and dimmed vision of those cities one comes back also to the shrines where the earth offers its sacrifice and burns its incense, to find, in the silence and solitude, Eternity visibly and sublimely symbolized. Here Nature is the garment of God, and man's life, recreated in vision and faith, rises like the hills in peace and purity to those heavens which give it beauty and fertility and spiritual significance.

## Chapter XII

### The Companionship of the Sky

**I**T is easy to feel at home in quiet, sheltered places and to have a sense of God's care and love in the cheerful warmth of the hearth ; but it is not easy to have the same sense of watchful affection in the presence of the great forces of nature or of those sublime aspects of beauty and power which are worn by the sea and sky. It is probable that the great majority of men and women are chilled when they are brought face to face with the vastness and sublimity of the Universe. The pocket map of creation which our forefathers carried, with the complete and easy key to the divine purpose and plan which went with it, and which made the earth the centre of the universe and man the supreme object of crea-

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tive thought, made faith in a personal love and care behind all visible things comparatively easy of attainment; but now that science has cast that little chart aside with all the other outworn maps of a half-discovered world, God seems, to many sincere seekers after him, to have withdrawn so far that human searching cannot find him, or to have become so awful in his lonely infinity that he has creatures but no children. An elemental chill seems to rise from the abysmal depths which science has opened; an oppressive silence seems to reign in those limitless regions along whose farthest boundaries the stars fade into fathomless night.

“We no longer view our planet as the centre of the universe,” writes Mr. Illingworth, “and our cosmical insignificance is supposed to argue our personal unimportance. It seems inconceivable that, amid the limitless immensity of space and the endless possibilities of time, our earth should have been the scene, and our race

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the witness, of one unique divine event.” To which are wisely added the words of Pascal : “ If the entire physical universe conspired to crush a man, the man would still be nobler than the entire physical universe, for he would know that he was crushed.”

Faith must grow with knowledge, and man's conception of God expand with man's comprehension of the greatness of the home which God has made for him. The time is not distant when science will be recognized as the most helpful friend religion has had in this many-sided century. For science has rectified and purified our conception of God as well as enlarged and clarified it. The greater the creation the greater the creator. The God of the whole earth and of all men is vaster and diviner than the God of Israel ; and yet the Israelite found a sense of nearness and comfort in the feeling that Jehovah was the God of his race which would have been lost if he had been told that the Jew and the Greek were alike in

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the sight of the Infinite. It is inevitable that God should seem vaster with every extension of human knowledge; not because he changes, but because our capacity to comprehend him and to follow the lines of his creation constantly enlarges. And with that enlargement of conception there ought to go a deepening of that joy which has its springs in faith. The greater our thought of God, the greater must be our sense of peace and safety in him. In another century men will have become familiar with the larger world in which they live, and will feel at home in it; as the Mediterranean peoples, who once dreaded the Atlantic as an unknown and perilous sea, now find the greater ocean less dangerous than the smaller one.

Vastness has a beauty all its own. God needs a great canvas for some landscapes; and there is a glory in the sky which no lesser arch of space could contain. That glory cannot be seen from the lower reaches; it must have the clear

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sweep of unbroken horizon lines and the clarity of mountain air. To see the sky in its majesty one must be able to put the earth below or behind him. There are points which seem to have been made as places of celestial observation; summits, crests of hills, stretches of upland, which seem to project from the ball of the earth so that the observer can detach himself from the globe and give himself up to the sky. Night and silence are about him; the heat of the day and the turmoil of cities are forgotten. Under a veil of darkness the great world sleeps and the "infinite heavens break open to the highest." It is no confining roof of blue, studded with lamps, into which one looks in such an hour; it is an infinitude of space, star rising above star and world shining beyond world in the farthest reaches of vision. What radiant stillness, what soundless movement, what silent power, in that immeasurable field

. . . unfathom'd, untrod,  
Save by Even and Morn, and the angels of God.



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And yet how familiar it all seems, and how close to the life of man through its ministry to the needs of a spirit which is always thirsting for beauty without flaw and for power without limitations! In the majesty of the sky on a cloudless night infinity seems to clothe itself with light as with a garment, and to sit at the doors of our human life. In the majesty of that companionship all the material side of that life seems to turn to mere shadow; what are the few years of mortality measured by the dateless duration of the heavens, and how feeble is the power of man in comparison with the power which holds those shining worlds in their places!

But the spiritual side of man's life, the immortal part of it, leaps up to catch that far-shining splendour, and rejoices in it. The little earth, which is its school, fades out of sight, and the vast universe, in which its full life is to be, visits and invites the imperishable spirit. The body becomes a thing of naught in that glori-

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ous presence ; but the soul, which sees it, searches it, learns its secrets, masters its laws, is at home with it. To be solitary under a starlit sky is to have a companionship which not only uplifts and glorifies those who enjoy it, but which seems more intimate than human fellowships ; as if out of that vast space and through that sublime silence, God found quiet and room for intimate approach. Under such a sky the spirit expands in an ecstasy of delight. Human speech seems flippant and discordant ; and the heavens are more companionable than the earth. The essence of companionableness is liberation ; escape from limitation of expression, lack of comprehension, of sympathy, of aspiration. The air of earth often grows close and suffocating ; the spirit longs for greater freshness, purity, freedom. Under a stretch of starlight there comes this sense of detachment from lower and lesser things, this feeling of getting into one's native atmosphere. Instead of a sense of lone-

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liness from that immeasurable distance there comes a deep sense of home-coming, as if the spirit were finding itself and its place.

Measured by the scale of extension, one feels insignificant in the presence of that vast manifestation of the infinite power; measured by intension, one feels on an equality with the universe. Vast as it is, his thought runs beyond it; sublime as it is, his imagination rises above it to still vaster orders of form and appearances of power. He is at home because it seems adequate, so far as material beauty and splendour can be adequate, to his conception of what a divinely ordered universe ought to be. It satisfies the imagination by its infinitude; it rests the soul by its very magnitude; it liberates by the sense of power which it conveys. The beauty, order, and power which shine in the unclouded sky express that infinity with which the spirit feels its own kinship. The earth seems narrow, rigid, confined;

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the sky alone gives the sense of immensity and freedom. The infinite in the soul recognizes the infinite in the stellar splendour shining in the fathomless deeps of space, and is at home with it and at rest in it.

## Chapter XIII

### The Sea is His

**T**HE thoughts of the Nation have been in recent years with the men on the high seas. Their daring, their quick response to every demand on character, discipline, and skill, and their brilliant achievements, have kindled the imagination of the country as it has not been kindled for years past. To many, recent events have been like the lifting of a great curtain; they had been so long home-bound that they had almost forgotten that there were other worlds beyond the horizon, other peoples beyond the seas, marvellous countries beyond the dip of the sky. Suddenly, in the quietness of this sluggish content, reports of great deeds on distant oceans have come flashing beneath the tides, strange names freighted with the rich-

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ness of the tropics have crossed the threshold of familiar speech, and distant peoples have moved into the field of interest. The ships of the Nation sailing through remote waters or cruising along unfamiliar shores, have been the forerunners of the thoughts of the Nation.

From the earliest times the sea has united rather than separated men; it has made the ends of the earth accessible. Three-quarters of the surface of the globe is covered with water; and this vast flood, the rush of whose tides seems to threaten the very existence of the land, is sometimes spoken of as if it were a vast and habitless waste! We forget how great a part of the most useful and heroic life of the race has been spent on this trackless waste; that armies of men live upon it and by means of it as normally and constantly as by the culture of the soil or the making of things of use, or by the thousand industries which minister to the needs of

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civilized society. The sea has a vast population dependent upon it; a commerce every year increasing in magnitude and value; its wastes are as carefully charted as the highways through a thickly settled country; its shoals and reefs and coast-lines are lighted like the streets of cities; vast companies of travellers traverse it from end to end as regularly as they use the trains on the main lines of the great railway systems. Men have become as familiar with it as with the land; its sources of revenue are almost as great; its service to humanity quite as important. The ceaseless roar of the surf as it breaks on the shore, the "moaning of the homeless sea," the fury of tempests, have bred the feeling that the sea is a habitless waste; it is, in reality, the home of multitudes of men, and it is as integral a part of the organism of modern life as the grain-bearing prairies, or those fertile valleys in which the sunlight seems to dream through the long summer days.

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When one takes into account the perils involved in all the industries and in the general conditions of life on land, it seems probable that the dangers of the sea are neither so many nor so great. The fury of the great deep is appalling, but the genius of man has gone a long way toward robbing it of its terrors; the loneliness of the sea is at times oppressive to the imagination, but the skill of man has made him at home when no sail is in sight and thousands of restless miles lie between him and land. The sea becomes as friendly as the land when men come to understand its conditions and to put themselves into harmony with it. Scourge it as did Xerxes, and its waves lap the shore in the scorn of perfect indifference; but study stars and tides, watch winds and currents, mark coast-lines and reefs, use the elements, set the sail to the wind or the screw to the impact of the water, and the sea works for and with man as cheerfully and generously as the land. It is the terror of the timid and the peril of



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the ignorant and wilful ; but it is the joy of the brave and the ally of the intelligent and skilful. It is God's in precisely the same sense in which the earth is his ; "for He made it." And what God has made is for man's use, safety, and growth whenever and wherever he is strong enough and wise enough to read God's thoughts and follow the lines of God's purpose.

The sea has been the friend of man in a special and peculiar sense. It has not only fed and clothed him and made a highway for him, but it has invited him to do heroic deeds, and it has stirred his imagination generation after generation. Its perils have seemed to invest the rewards it offered with a compelling charm for the daring and adventurous ; its spell has wrought on the most heroic spirits. The first sailors were explorers, and therefore heroes. No charts traced their course for them ; no lights burned on strange coasts to guide their perilous ways ; no bells tolled on dangerous reefs

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or were rung by the swing of the waves. They were beset with unknown perils; they faced unimagined calamities; but their galleys bravely broke the solitude of the Mediterranean, passed beyond the Pillars of Hercules into the vast outer sea, and through a thousand perilous years crossed and recrossed that sea until it has become a lighted highway of commerce. The story of the Sirens seems so probable that one who loves the sea is often tempted to accept it as history. Voices are always calling from out the distance and the shifting mists; voices full of a wonderful music, with tones that set the heart vibrating, and echo in the imagination like the sounds of a vaster world. That music has lured many to the fury of devouring seas, but it has invited more to brave deeds and splendid achievements. The sea has a nobler melody than the song of the Siren; out of its deeps there rises the great music of freedom, faith, and courage; that song of life which brave spirits are attuned to

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hear, and to the music of which the heroic in every age have moved gallantly on to great adventures and achievements.

God's world is not only a world of fertile fields and gardens sweet with flowers, of quiet firesides and of peaceful industry ; it is a world of peril, sacrifice, hardship, and heroic adventure as well. The wise man loves the ways of peace and ease ; but he loves also the danger of the great opportunity, the peril of the great undertaking, the chances of heroic search and trust. The heart must be by the fireside, but the spirit must know the ends of the earth ; for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof," and the children of the Infinite cannot reject any part of their heritage. It is better to go down with the tides than to sit always in inglorious content. Man is an adventurer, not a lotus-eater ; he was framed to be taught by experience, not to be shielded in inglorious ease. "He makes noble shipwreck who is lost in seeking worlds," says Lessing ; and the great

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critic's thought may be rounded out by adding Channing's beautiful line: "If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea." The song of the sea, which rises and falls with the tide along the shores of the world, is the song of life for hearts that grow cold in the selfishness of mere comfort, for the imagination that loses its larger reach in the sensuous warmth of fruitful valleys. Far inland that song is heard by those who are in peril of becoming the children of a day instead of the sons of God; like a faint music it sings in the hearts of the reapers at the centre of the continent, and straightway the great world beyond the horizon's rim sweeps into view. There is a restlessness which is idle and sterile; but there is also a discontent which is born of man's instinct to know what is in life and to mix himself with its deepest movement. And so God's sea sings forever in the ears of men that song of seeking and daring and risking which is the song of life.

And how beautiful the sea is! With

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what radiancy of colour, what soft loveliness, what splendour of light, God has clothed it as with a garment! The land has its majesty of mountain outline, its endless charm of varying form; but the sea is all motion, atmosphere, and changing light. Its voice seems to come from far beyond the horizon, and all its beauty is steeped in mystery. The land reveals its resources of use and charm; one feels that he may count and possess them; but the sea hides and baffles and eludes. Its secret is never told; one never becomes familiar with it; it makes its appeal always to the imagination, never to the memory. Is it not a symbol of that mystery which encircles man's life as the sea encircles its islands? A mystery sometimes of darkness and storm, and sometimes of unsearchable light and splendour; the mystery of forces not yet mastered, of elements not yet comprehended, of a world vaster and more wonderful than that in which we build our homes and plant our gardens?

## Chapter XIV

### In Troubled Times

**T**HERE are times of trouble, when anxiety, care, suffering, or sorrow come to a man, and he feels himself isolated from his fellows by the very privacy of his experience; and there are troubled times, when change, uncertainty, and wide possibilities of general calamity are abroad, and communities or nations drink the cup of anguish together. In such crises, private sorrows are rivulets which flow from the great current of public sorrow, and individual calamity is merged into general calamity. Society has its deep experiences, its sacrifices, its moments of anguish, no less than the individual men and women who compose it. In these better years, in which the world has measurably pushed back the old

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frontiers of barbaric spirit and method, and kindlier ways and works have come, we are in danger of forgetting the times of anguish through which the world has passed; the cups of suffering which it has drained; the painful waiting for returning peace and prosperity; the weariness of spirit which followed close upon long periods of strain and grief and unrest. In personal sorrow the foundations upon which one has built external fortune remain undisturbed; in troubled times these foundations are shaken, and the very bases of the world are moved.

Through sorrowful ways men have climbed to the heights from which they now look into the heavens and over the landscape of life. Again and again social revolutions have broken up the established order, and men have faced moral and civic chaos with sinking hearts; again and again the darkness of despair has settled upon the earth, and men have asked in anguish of spirit if there were

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no God. Think of the burden which must have rested on the spirit of a high-minded and far-seeing Roman in those tragic years when the world he knew was steadily crumbling before the relentless sweep of barbarism ! The old order was visibly passing ; its faith was dying, its civic power slipping from its feeble grasp, its moral energy spent ; nothing was before it but swifter decline and hurrying death. And centuries were to pass before a new order was to rise out of the wreckage. It was a tragic age, and there must have been a wide and deep sense of despair in the souls of the best men and women. A kindred hopelessness spread through Germany during the century of violence and devastation which followed the Reformation ; when ruined cities, desolate fields, blasted industries, and wide wreckage of home and life sapped the vitality of the people. Under the shadow of a calamity so general and so crushing personal misfortunes were well-nigh obliterated. Through



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such a storm of sorrow this country passed a generation ago. There were wide tracts of fertile territory which were blackened with fire and ruin; there were countless homes destroyed in the general conflagration; and there were no homes which sorrow might not enter, no firesides where care and anxiety did not find a place. For there are times when the sorrows of nations rise like a flood, and all the sweet places of peace and happiness, the quiet gardens of beauty and fruitfulness, which men have slowly and painfully made for themselves, are menaced with destruction.

In troubled times those who suffer have the comfort of companionship. In a time of trouble a man whose little garden of happiness is blighted while all the landscape lies in the sun is tempted to carry his grief into solitude and add to his anguish the sense of loneliness; in troubled times, when the same care sits at all hearths, men instinctively turn to each other. At sea, when the ship is in

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great peril, the passengers crowd together ; not because they can escape peril by facing it in company, but because they can gain courage by companionship. The sense of human kinship grows fresh and keen when men stand together in the face of a common danger ; the feeling of brotherliness is born anew in hearts that are overshadowed by the same anxiety. A nation silently reaffirms its unity when it enters upon one of those paths along which loss and death await each traveller. The animosities of conflicting interests, the jealousies of localities, the indifference bred of preoccupation, dissolve like a mist, and men look into each other's faces again and know that they are brothers. Marvellous moral changes are wrought when a nation which has forgotten the perils of society in its own prosperity suddenly finds itself face to face with the tragic side of life. In such an hour, when the din of traffic sinks into silence and the voices of contention and discord are hushed, a whole people sometimes

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hears that still small voice which has its warning and its consolation for nations as for individuals.

Troubled times are often noble times ; for they put an end to ancient wrongs and usher in the new day of peace and righteousness. In easy and opulent years when the earth yields her increase almost without effort, and trade thrives almost without watching, men are always in peril of becoming indifferent to the higher interests of life, of losing that vigour which makes manhood a synonym for power, of becoming indifferent to the claims and sorrows of others so long as they themselves are left in peace. When the air grows heavy and men grow languid, the breaking of the storm is the swift and startling announcement that God remembers and cares though we forget. In merciful severity God sometimes arouses us from our slumbers and bids us face our responsibilities and do our work. The birth-pang of a society which is entering upon a larger life is often full of

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anguish, but is better than the painless lethargy which precedes death.

There is no true life for the community or the nation without sacrifice ; no real growth without the pains of toil and change and the chances of sorrow. We cannot share the incalculable blessings which society confers upon us without also sharing its perils and bearing its burdens. If the general sorrow enters our household and becomes a personal grief, that grief is the sacrifice we offer for country and humanity. There is an anguish which is also the divinest of opportunities and privileges ; it is the anguish of bearing the cross, not for ourselves, but for others ; of laying our lives down that others may take their lives up in nobler ways and happier times. God is never nearer to comfort and sustain than in troubled times, because he is never more evidently working his will in the wide and confused movements of the world.

## Chapter XV

### In Times of Change

**T**HE human spirit craves change and action, and it also craves rest and permanence. Those whose vitality is high, whose energy is alert, whose ardor is contagious, cannot find contentment in repose; they need the stir and opportunity of large movements and wide activities. It is this deep spiritual necessity which has carried men into unknown perils, into unsailed seas, into unexplored continents. It is not mere restlessness, nor is it sheer recklessness; it is the working out of an instinct which lies deep in human nature. There are long stretches of luxurious years in the history of the race, long periods of sluggish inaction; but for the most part the history of men is the story of a wonder-

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ful journey. There have been pauses in the journey; times when the inn has seemed so pleasant that the travellers have loitered along, reluctant to break the charm of restful hospitality; but there has always come a morning when the good-byes were said and the journey resumed. Sometimes these places of repose have grown beautiful with art and use and love and memory; so beautiful that this very loveliness has woven a spell of almost magical power to beguile and detain; sometimes the travellers have lingered so long that they have almost forgotten the necessity of the journey in the permanence and perfection of their surroundings. But that destiny, which is not chance but Providence, has finally asserted itself, and, with bitter regrets and sorrowful tears, the travellers have set out again on the endless quest.

There are few events in history so impressive to the imagination as the journeying of the race. When the mist

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rises on the earliest morning of the historic day of man's life in this world, there comes into view the long procession of humanity on the march; races emerging from those great plains of Central Asia where man seems to have learned his earliest lessons, and seeking new homes in the south and west. Across the Indus and the Hellespont the travellers move in long procession. They rest for a time; they build, adorn, organize, expand; great cities and noble works of art arise; the quest seems to be over. But the march is arrested, not ended. The column bivouacks for the night; in the morning it is once more afield. The long line traverses Greece and Italy; rests a while and sweeps on to the Atlantic; pauses again; hoists sail and plunges into the wilderness of the New World; pauses again, and again seeks its fortune in Africa, in the remote islands of the Southern Seas; goes back to the old home in the far East, and starts afresh with other hopes

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and methods and plans. In the long vision of history there is no permanence of place or condition; the race seems smitten with an unrest which drives it hither and thither like the waves of the sea.

And this constant movement goes on, not only in material, but in intellectual and spiritual spheres. Society is continually re-adjusting its institutions to changes in its condition. The forms of government are in constant flux, passing through long series of transformations; for as the spirit is liberated it demands larger range and scope. History is the record of the expansion of the spirit, and of its endeavour to bring political institutions and social conditions into harmony with itself. In like manner, and from a kindred necessity, that spirit is always reconstructing its systems of thought. Such a truth as that which Charles Darwin illustrated with such wealth of knowledge and brought into such clear light involves a reconstruction of the



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whole philosophy of life ; for truth in one field is truth in all fields, and a discovery in physiology is, sooner or later, a discovery in philosophy and theology. The history of thought is one long record of change ; not of restless movement from point to point, but of expansion from stage to stage. In religion there is the same progression, in spite of the passionate efforts of formalists of all creeds to identify the spiritual life with certain unchanging interpretations of facts. The facts remain, but they are seen from different points of view by successive generations ; they are seen in different relations as the result of that disclosure of truth which is always taking place. A living God in a living world, and a progressive revelation of that God in knowledge and experience, bring religion within the sweep of that majestic movement which bears men forward, like a rising tide, to fuller knowledge, clearer vision, and larger life.

All things are in motion ; science tells

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us that the stability of matter is only apparent, and that what seems to be immovably solid is in inconceivably rapid motion. Is there, then, no rest for the soul which longs for certainty, repose, and unshaken foundations? There is the only true rest: rest in growth. The stable and unchanging element in this world is not in the things which God has made; it is in God's character and purpose. That which gives a great life unity is not fixity of policy, but fixity of principle. The unity of such a life as Mr. Gladstone's is to be sought for, not in rigid adherence to the theories of politics with which it set out, but in unshaken loyalty to what the man believed to be the will of God in the government of men. The highest consistency is found in continuity of growth, not in maintaining an unchanged position. In like manner, the enduring element in this changing life is to be found in the quest of the soul, not in the permanence of its habitations. The line of

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expansion, growth, aspiration, is the line of light through all the darkness and mystery of mutation. That which reveals the greatness of the race is its inability to find rest in any habitations which it builds for itself; it has another home, and to that home it travels; often with weary and halting step, but with a divine instinct in its heart. The bird rests at a dizzy height on even wing; and the same rest is offered to the spirit of man; for God made the air as well as the earth, and the only safety for the soul is in movement towards Him.

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## Chapter XVI

### The Root of Courage

**T**HERE is no real courage unless there is real perception of danger. The man who does not comprehend the perils which surround him, and is therefore calm and collected, is not courageous ; he is simply ignorant. And, in like manner, the unimaginative man, who has no consciousness of danger until he looks straight into its eyes, is not courageous ; he is dull and sluggish. The highest courage is manifested only by the man who knows what he faces and fully realizes it. To sail over mines of which the ship's master has no knowledge involves no intrepidity ; to be able to locate every mine in the channel, and then to pass calmly over, shows the pluck and dash which stir the admiration of the world.

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The boy of sluggish temper finds nothing in the blackness of the woods after nightfall, and goes on his way in easy indifference ; the boy of quick imagination faces an invisible company of strange creatures, and his quick advance into the mysterious gloom means a victory over himself. The finer the organization, the clearer the perception of danger and the greater the courage required to face it. The real hero is not the man who is insensible to peril, but he who overcomes a quick sensitiveness to its presence. Some of the bravest spirits the world has known have shown every evidence of that shrinking of the body which we call fear ; but they vanquished the hesitation of the nerves by the decision of the spirit.

To feel keenly the perils of life is not to be cowardly ; it is to have adequate knowledge and sensitiveness of mind. The man who does his daily work without thought of the great natural forces which hold him in their grasp, of the grave possibilities of calamity which are

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never absent from society, of the countless dangers that beset the individual life, may be faithful and honest, but cannot be heroic; for the hero is the man who looks all these perils in the face, and goes quietly on his way to his journey's end. No man can live in this world with an open mind and an active imagination without constant perception of many kinds of danger; and the more such a man knows and the greater his ability to realize the existence of things which are invisible becomes, the keener will be his perception of the possibilities of risk and loss. The unsensitive man lives without fear because he sees no peril in his situation; the sensitive man who is also courageous lives without fear because he sends his thought through all the possibilities of danger to the ultimate safety.

For the highest courage has its root in faith. One may be bold because he is ignorant or because he lacks sensitiveness; one may be indifferent to danger because he is indifferent to fate; one may

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be brave from that instinctive pluck which focusses all a man's powers on the doing of the thing in hand, or the resolute holding of the place to which one has been assigned; but the quality which sees with clear intelligence all the possibilities of peril, which is sensitive to pain and loss, which loves life and light and the chances of work, and yet calmly faces calamity and death, is born of faith, and grows to splendid maturity by the nurture of faith. Peter in the court of the High Priest's house was a coward because his faith was faint and uncertain; Peter after the Resurrection was a hero because his faith had triumphed over the weakness of his nature. The early martyrs died with smiles on their uplifted faces, enduring torture and death as seeing Him who is invisible. General Havelock once said that in every regiment of British troops there are one hundred men who would storm the gates of hell, and eight hundred who would follow them. The eight hundred were

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inspired by faith in their dauntless comrades ; the one hundred by faith in their commanders, their cause, their prestige, their training, or themselves. In such a troop as the famous Gordon Highlanders, whose history has been one long record of dauntless courage, the very tradition of daring inspires faith. Such fighters may be annihilated, but they cannot be beaten into retreat. There is something in which they believe more passionately than they believe in life.

A keen observer, who is also one of the most vivid of contemporary writers, recently said in conversation that the greatest fighters he had known were by temperament and disposition, the most peaceful of men. He named more than one famous English soldier, whose name is a synonym for daring audacity, who exhausts all the arts of diplomacy before resorting to arms, who hates war, and yet who fights with Titanic energy and apparent recklessness when the battle is on.



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These are men of true courage, because they face the issues of life and death, not with the stolidity of ignorance or the blind pluck of brute force, but with clear intelligence of all that war involves. The bravery of the Greek is more admirable than that of the Turk, because the Greek is intensely alert and sensitive, while the Turk is stolid and indifferent. It is said that no troops are so quiet under fire as the Turkish troops. Nothing disturbs or excites them. Under the play of murderous guns they move as calmly as if they were deploying on a parade-ground. In some cases this courage is the fruit of a fanatical religious faith; in most cases it is due to lack of physical and mental sensitiveness.

The root of the noblest courage is faith in God. The courage that inspires is clear-eyed and sensitive. Men do not care for the fluent condolence of the comforter who has never known grief; they long for the word of one who has passed through a like trial and been vic-

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torious. The man whose optimism is a matter of perfect health, and who takes no account of the black mysteries and the tragic sorrows of life, can never lead his fellows; we follow those only who have faced all the horror of darkness and who feel the full weight of the great and terrible burden of the world. Courage becomes contagious and inspiring only where it grows like a beautiful flower in the very heart of the storm. If Christ had not drunk the cup of anguish to the bottom, he would not have been the supreme comforter. The courage which shines like a light on the confused and storm-swept field of life must face and feel all the perils and yet rise above them; it must be encompassed with all the mists and clouds of earth and yet pierce them to the vision of the undimmed sun above all fogs and blackness. There is no real rest until we reach God; there is no noble and inspiring courage until we trust in him. When we build on such a faith, floods may break on the

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foundations, but cannot move them; clouds may obscure the sun, but cannot destroy it. "You may kill us, but you cannot hurt us," said one of the noblest of the early martyrs to his persecutors. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

## Chapter XVII

### Not Renunciation, but Co-operation

**T**HE ascetic ideal of the religious life very slowly relaxes its hold on the imagination; and renunciation is still, to many pious minds, the supreme evidence of the life of God in the soul of man. Submission, surrender, self-effacement, have so long had the heaviest emphasis that we have come to regard them as ends in themselves. This is not, however, the ideal of Christ, nor is it the ideal which the healthy human spirit demands, and in the attainment of which it finds satisfaction. Readiness to give up everything is, indeed, the attitude of those whose lives seek their law of action in obedience to the will of God; but surrender is not, in itself, an end; it is always a means to something more positive

Not Renunciation, but Co-operation and enduring. Renunciation is often the sublimest possible act of a human soul; but renunciation, at its best and highest, is negative; it is surrendering something, giving up something. Renunciation and submission find their value in the fact that they open the way for something higher and more enduring. When the martyr dies, it is the relation of his death to his faith which gives it supreme dignity; when the long-cherished hope is surrendered, the man does not linger at the place of renunciation — he takes refuge on some higher plane. And this not as a matter of spiritual barter, of calculated exchange of the lesser for the greater; but because life finds its satisfaction in achievement. A man is often called upon to renounce that upon which he has set his heart, and renunciation is then the highest duty; but there is always something beyond it; it opens the way to some kind of positive achievement.

The highest type of character is not

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that which lies like clay in the hands of the invisible potter — to recall one of Omar Khayyám's most striking figures — but that which, through renunciation and submission, accepts the divine will in order that it may actively co-operate with it. Speaking reverently, nothing could be more repellent to God or man than the "worm of the dust" attitude. It not only degrades man, but it puts an affront upon God. Humility of spirit, the consciousness of unworthiness, and the sense of dependence, are constantly with all men who strive after a righteousness which they are painfully aware is still far beyond them; but these are the signs of a nature which honours rather than effaces itself. Professions of absolute unworthiness belong only to those who have made themselves entirely unworthy; they are untrue on the lips of those who, in weakness and the consciousness of evil tendencies, are still seeking after God. For God is not an Oriental sovereign to be placated by grovellings in the dust, by

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obeisances which typify slavish fear and submission; he is a Father who demands self-respecting obedience from his children. To cringe and cower before him is not the wholesome attitude of a son; it is the attitude of a slave; and to take it, even in thought, is to blur the image of that beauty of holiness which we call the divine righteousness.

The will of God is not accomplished in us, nor are its fruits borne, by simple submission; by submission we accept that will, but it still remains to perform it. For submission is passive, and the divine will carries with it the most continuous and tireless activity. To open the mind is the first step towards acquiring any kind of knowledge; but the mere act of memorizing does not give us the spirit of any kind of knowledge, nor does it give us the mastery of it; we must think about it, arrange it, fit it into the body of knowledge already acquired, express it in words, and incorporate it in some form of use, before we really possess

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it. We must not only accept but employ it. We must keep silent while God speaks through any experience, in order that we may hear what is spoken; but when the word has been uttered, we must put the truth into our lives in some kind of action. When sorrow comes, we must bow the head and accept the grief which keeps company with it; but our stay by the open grave must be brief; the lesson taught us must bear its fruit elsewhere. When the stone is rolled against the sepulchre in which our dearest hope is laid away out of our sight, our first duty is to surrender and accept with such grace of faith and peace as God gives us, but our place is not beside the spot where our dead is entombed; our place is where men have need of the help which the chastened spirit, through its very bruising, is best able to give. That divine sympathy which grows in the shadow of a great sorrow finds its opportunity far from the place where it was watered with tears.



## Not Renunciation, but Co-operation

Our wills are not ours to be crushed and broken ; they are ours to be trained and strengthened. Our affections are not ours to be blighted and crucified ; they are ours to be deepened and purified. The rich opportunities of life are not held out to us only to be snatched away by an invisible hand patiently waiting for the hour when the cup is sweetest ; they are given to us that we may grow alike through their use or their withdrawal. They are real, they are sweet, and they are worthy of our longing for them ; we gain nothing by calling them dross, or the world an illusion, or ourselves the victims of deception, or by exalting renunciation as the highest virtue. When these opportunities are denied us, it is a real, not an imaginary, loss which we sustain ; and our part is not that of bare renunciation, of simple surrender ; our part is to recognize the loss, to bear the pain, and to find deeper and richer life in *doing* the will of God. A child may rigidly and mechanically accept the

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will of its father by blind obedience ; or it may recognize the purpose behind the imposition of that will, and intelligently and gladly co-operate with it. The educational difference between the influence of the two attitudes is incalculable. Christ accepted the will of the Father, not by passive renunciation, but by active co-operation. He did not, like so many Oriental mystics, separate himself from his fellows in order that he might reflect, undisturbed, the divine image ; he bore that image in his own nature under the familiar and sorrowful eyes of men ; he wrought out that will in word and deed and habit, until his life became the will of God incarnate among men.

## Chapter XVIII

### The Soul of Goodness

**T**HE soul of goodness is love ; for it is out of love that goodness issues, and it is in love that goodness culminates. There are other motives which incite to goodness, but they aid and foster, they do not create it. Without love there may be good actions, but there cannot be goodness ; as a quality, goodness must be rooted in love. Most men are still so far from a true conception of love that they suspect it of certain inherent possibilities of weakness, and strive to steady and invigorate it by bringing to its aid the ideas of law and duty ; not discerning that love carries in its heart a law far more searching and inexorable than any that was ever graven on tables of stone or written in statute-

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books, and that duty, in the sense of obligation to serve, is its daily life. The severity of Christ, the teacher of love, is more terrible than that of the sternest Old Testament lawgiver, because the test he applies not only tries conduct but searches motive. The law is satisfied when restoration is made or the penalty paid ; it cannot go further. But to love, which searches the heart as with a lighted torch, these are only the external signs of repentance ; it cannot rest short of a complete cleansing of the spirit. With a severity born of a passionate determination to make the best in every man supreme, it will accept nothing less than final and lasting purification.

No quality of the infinite love is more divine than its ability to bear and to impose suffering ; it would rather the loved one were slain than dishonoured ; rather he were tortured than stained. In Mr. Watts's beautiful picture love is leading life up the steep pathway, over the stones that bruise and pierce, with infinite gen-

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tleness but with inexorable purpose. For love can lead where law cannot drive, and love can win where law is powerless to force obedience. For love has resources with which law is not armed; it has the fellowship of burden-bearing and suffering. It asks no one to go where it is not ready to go itself. By its very nature it takes in the experience of one whom it strives to reclaim or correct, and in the anguish of the repentance which it compels it often sweats great drops of blood. Law declares the guilt of the world and imposes its penalty; love carries the consciousness of that guilt home to the deepest nature, compels not only the forsaking of the sin, but the rebirth, with all its pangs, of the soul of the sinner, and walks step by step through the humiliation and bitterness of repentance, restitution, and recovery. It shares the shame and anguish long after the law has run its course and is satisfied. It compels the guilty to confess and restore with an inexorableness more terrible

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than that of law itself; but it does not leave the offender in the dark; it goes to prison with him, wears the garb and does the work of punishment with him; and when he has cleansed himself, welcomes him back to life and duty when all faces are turned away.

There is nothing so terrible as the insistence of love on perfect righteousness. It cannot compromise; it is powerless to accept anything less, because it has a consuming desire to bring out the final touch of nobleness in the soul it loves. They have not known the divinest secret of love who have not suffered from its inflexible idealism, its inexorable determination to get the best and the most out of the loved one. Many a husband has rebelled in feeling against his wife's faithful loyalty to his own noblest nature, and has come at last, in the clearer vision of his own growth, to reverence that insistence upon the best in aim, conduct, and habit as the very highest form of tenderness. It is not easy to live under the

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same roof with the ideal of what one ought to be and to do ; but there comes a time, in such companionship, when the very roof is sacred because it has sheltered it. One must be good indeed before he can live at ease with a great love. For this reason Calvary is more awful than Sinai, and the patient sufferings of Christ more appalling than all the thunderings of the lawgivers. For love is not only all tenderness, forgiveness, and service ; it is also all severity, sanity, duty, righteousness. It is far stronger and safer than law, because it is far more searching and inexorable.

## Chapter XIX

### Retreats for the Spirit

“**A**S often as you can in the course of the day, recall your spirit into the presence of God,” writes St. Francis of Sales in his meditations on the Devout Life. In the noise and confusion of the visible, one needs constantly to take refuge in the invisible. We are always in the presence of God; to find that presence we do not need to seek the silence of the desert or the monastery; we need only to remember that we are in His presence and to recall our spirits to the consciousness that wherever we are, there is God also. To give his deep counsel greater definiteness, the great Bishop of Genoa adds these striking words: “Remember, then, to make occasional retreats into the soli-



## Retreats for the Spirit

tude of your heart, whilst outwardly engaged in business or conversation. This mental solitude cannot be prevented by the multitude of those who are about you, for they are not about your heart, but about your body; so your heart may remain above, in the presence of God alone." This was the refuge of David under the burdens of the State; and in this habit lies the secret of that richness of expression of the spiritual life which makes the Book of Psalms one of the text-books of the religious life. "O Lord," cries the King, "as for me, I am always with Thee. I have set God always before me. Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens. My eyes are ever looking unto the Lord."

When St. Catherine of Siena, the good Bishop adds by way of illustration, was deprived by her parents of every opportunity for prayer and meditation, she made "a little interior oratory within her own soul," in which she found, at

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all times, the solitude of the heart which she craved. Persecution could not harm her. "You may kill us," wrote a great Christian to a Roman Emperor, "but you cannot hurt us." The noise and tumult of the world could not confuse her; she was in it, but she was not of it. She needed neither stated time of worship nor consecrated place to kneel in; her own heart had become a sanctuary, and her own soul a retreat. She was impregnable in the fastness of her spirit.

It is a great mistake to suppose that such retreats from the noise of the world are no longer necessary, that they are characteristic of a religious experience which the race has left behind in its swift movement forward. The modern world looks back with a kind of self-conscious complacency on the mediæval world, and thanks God in a very audible voice that it is no longer what it was five centuries ago. The progress has been great, and nowhere greater than in

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the freedom and breadth of the religious life as men now understand it ; but there have been losses as well as gains, and one of these losses is the apparent disappearance from the consciousness of a multitude of religious people of the need of silence and solitude in order that the presence of God may be felt. It is a noble manifestation of the Christian spirit which makes so many modern men impatient of any kind of religious confession which is not evidenced and confirmed by immediate and ardent service. Never before in the history of the race has religion been so swiftly and nobly translated into human helpfulness ; and men are everywhere showing their love for the invisible God by the love they bear for their brethren.

In this modern emphasis upon activity and helpfulness there is danger, however, that the springs of spiritual power may lose in depth and capacity. If an immense surface of hitherto arid territory is to be irrigated and its desola-

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tion turned into fruitfulness, the fountains themselves must be deepened. The impulse must gather force with the increased volume of activity. And so it comes about that to-day men need to realize more keenly than before that they are not only in the presence of their fellows, but that they are also in the presence of God. There is sore need of a revival of the mediæval consciousness not only of dependence upon God, but of dependence on meditation, prayer, and solitude of the spirit. The man who speaks often without constant and arduous preparation runs shallow in thought and becomes commonplace in expression ; the man who writes without tireless preparation of mind and spirit through reading, observation, and meditation, loses freshness, originality, and force and becomes a mere maker of sentences ; in like manner the religious man whose whole force goes out in practical work, without constant inward devoutness and seeking of God, becomes a

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religious mechanic and ceases to be a source of inspiration and power.

Activity is the manifestation of life, but it is not life. Life bears the fruit of service and helpfulness, but it is neither visible nor audible ; it is hidden in that mystery which not only veils the throne of God but enfolds everything else that is divine among men. To find that life one must withdraw from the visible into the invisible ; one must pass from the presence of man into the presence of God. And St. Catherine found and foreshadowed the way of the modern man when she made "a little interior oratory within her soul." Into these invisible places of meditation and worship one may go from the noise of the world as really as one steps from the tumult of the street into the vast silence of a cathedral ; but one does not need to seek them afar ; their noiseless doors are always within touch of the hand that feels for them.

## Chapter XX

### Sacrifice

**T**HAT the glory of victory is never without its deep shadow of sacrifice we have been learning again in recent days of mingled exultation and anxiety. At the end of the glowing account of the brilliant achievement comes the list of the killed and wounded ; and while the country rejoices in its gains, a hundred or a thousand homes are overshadowed by their losses. The old familiar story of sacrifice is told again in the new deeds and sufferings of new men, bravely making ready for new times : the story which every generation has learned by heart. For since time began — time being taken as the human record of eternity — men have been called upon to surrender the most precious things in exchange for

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their material and spiritual gains. Nothing great has been obtained without the payment of a great price. The common safety, the general comfort, the habits and customs of peaceful society, the development of trade, agriculture, commerce, art, civilization, have not been accomplished save through great sorrows and sacrifices. The long, slow emergence of men from barbarism has been marked, stage by stage, with anguish and the shedding of blood. All high and beautiful gifts, graces, and achievements have flowered on the stem of pain. If the Hebrew race had not pierced its heart with the terrible griefs of life, the Psalms would not have been written; if Dante had not walked the solitary path of exile and climbed the lonely stairs, there would have been no Divine Comedy; if the great passions had not sown and reaped their bitter harvest, there would have been no "Hamlet," "Macbeth," or "Lear." The sorrow of the world has given poetry its most moving notes and

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music its most thrilling tones. In trial and bitterness the foundations of States have been laid; through surrender and loss communities have taken the leadership of civilization; and these precious fruits of self-denial and self-surrender have been preserved only by fresh sacrifices.

When one turns away from the movements of men in masses and the gains of humanity as a whole, and searches the secret stories of individual lives, the same record of sacrifice comes to light. No man has ever gained anything real without giving a part of himself in payment for his achievement. Behind every genuine work of skill or art or mercy there is a hidden history of surrender of the things that men value — time, ease, leisure, rest, pleasure. That slow and invisible accumulation of moral intelligence and power which we call character is made by those alone who have counted all lesser gains cheap in comparison with that final wealth which enriches the soul,



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and grows, not by saving, but by spending; and those great heights of spiritual achievement upon which, in every generation, a few men and women walk with God are gained only by the path of sorrow and surrender. No man ever secures that clearness of vision with which St. Paul and St. John looked into the divine mysteries without first looking into the heart of great griefs and bearing patiently the weight of the supreme sorrows. It is written in the structure of the soul that no man can attain the higher skills, or master the higher wisdom, or live the divinest life until he has made acquaintance with grief.

From the beginning men have felt, even when they have not comprehended, the necessity of sacrifice. They have misunderstood and distorted its significance; they have even reversed its meaning and interpreted it as an arbitrary requirement of God, who exacted from his creatures that which he was not willing to do for them; they have stained

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countless altars with blood, and painfully elaborated systems of thought to make the reversal of the divine fact of sacrifice comprehensible and credible. But in ritual and creed religion has instinctively fastened upon this great idea as central and fundamental in the relations of the human with the divine, and silently, in every age, sacrifice has shown its true nature. A few spirits in every time have discerned that it is not an arbitrary requirement, but the very heart of that divine process of growth which we call life; the beautiful and constant witness of the divine sonship of the race. And in the fullness of time God appeared among men in a human form; not as supreme and sovereign, with angels about him, and nature breaking into songs of recognition, and men reverent and obedient and worshipful; but acquainted with grief rejected, bruised, smitten, and crucified: the sublime revelation, which could never have issued from the mind of man, of a suffering God, redeeming the race, not

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from his own wrath, but from its sins, by the eternal sacrifice.

Into this mystery of sacrifice, which half-savage men have not wholly missed, the wisest man searches with the certainty that, though he cannot in this mortal life fathom it, he cannot entirely lose its meaning in the order of experience. In the hour when his soul cries out in the anguish of sudden loss, of the breaking of ties which are dearer than life, of those great surrenders which for the moment seem to be the giving up of life itself, he is not unaware of the liberation of spirit, which is being accomplished in him almost against his will. The pains of growth may make him unmindful of the growth which is taking place; but when the poignancy of grief is past and the first agony of surrender over, there is a new wisdom in his soul and a new strength in his will. In a world of confused standards, imperfect vision, and of relative values we are taught, through suffering, the scale of absolute values.

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The price we pay for the highest things makes their importance clear to us ; and when we have once learned that lesson we have gone a long way toward learning the deepest lesson of life. He who has gained character at the expense of ease and leisure and pleasure is never again confused by the charms or delights or solicitations of these lesser things. As they recede from him he knows that they are subordinate to the gains he has put in their place ; and even in those moments of spiritual relaxation which come to strong men, though he may recall them with a momentary regret, he would not go back to them. He has grown beyond their ability to sustain or satisfy him.

12-29-56

## Chapter XXI

### The Pain of Limitation

**T**O live cheerfully with ourselves is among the most difficult tasks which life lays upon us. When one thinks of it, there is something appalling in the necessity of spending all one's time for fifty, seventy, or more years with the same person. This inevitable companionship with ourselves, this necessity of seeing always with the same eyes, thinking with the same brain, doing work with the same faculties, passing through all manner of experience with the same temperament, makes life one long, monotonous imprisonment unless every resource for enlargement and enrichment is used. It is this blighting monotony rather than "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" which drives some men and

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women to the mad folly of suicide — that futile effort to break away from self instead of emancipating self. For monotony is far more difficult to bear than misfortune; as the fury and perils of the storm are easier to endure than long, weary weeks of dull grey weather. The changes and the dangers of the tempest may terrify us at times, but they take us out of ourselves, they make us forget ourselves, they fasten our thoughts on the movement of the world about us. To mix with action, to feel the stir of the world, to be in the vortex of change, involves great and inevitable risks; but life itself is a constant risk.

It is not risk which depresses and paralyzes men; it is monotonous inactivity. Men do not put pistols to their heads when the battle is on, and every post is a place of peril; they succumb to despair when dull day succeeds dull day in depressing succession. It is monotony which eats the heart out of joy, destroys the buoyancy of the spirit, and turns hope

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to ashes ; it is monotony which saps the vitality of the emotions, depletes the energy of the will, and finally turns the miracle of daily existence into dreary commonplace. And monotony has its roots, not in our conditions, but in ourselves. In the same conditions one man will find constant interest and another persistent dullness ; one man will be awakened and stimulated, and another stupefied and deadened. There are, of course, circumstances which prey upon the stoutest hearts and chill the most ardent spirits ; but men are rarely placed in environments which cannot be modified by the energy of the spirit. The prison which condemns some men to despair gives others time and quiet for meditation. Raleigh found the Tower a convenient place in which to write the "History of the World," and Silvio Pellico turned his duress into an opportunity of winning fame. Most men are crushed by invalidism, but John Addington Symonds transformed his enforced

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residence in the high Alps into one prolonged period of fruitful work. It is difficult to believe that he could have done more if he had spent those toilsome years in the beautiful restfulness of Oxford. The hand of doom rested early upon Robert Louis Stevenson; but he became one of the great adventurers of the time, and turned his quest for health into a quest for that large experience which makes its possessor a master of life. Conditions have much to do with success, but they are not its determining factors; in the last analysis we are the makers or losers of our fortunes; and life is interesting or monotonous as we ourselves are interesting or monotonous.

The art of living with ourselves is, therefore, something to be studied with persistent energy and intelligence; for through its mastery we attain freedom and happiness. And one of the most difficult lessons which are involved in learning this art is cordial acceptance of our own limitations. It is the wall which



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these limitations build about us which imprisons and suffocates us. It is true, not all men are conscious of that wall. The sincere man or woman is free from conceit, for conceit always involves a certain lack of downright honesty with ourselves, which makes us blind to our limitations. To feel keenly the pressure of our limitations we must be thoroughly honest with ourselves; and one of the compensations for the consciousness of our narrow range of thought and productiveness is the consciousness that he who clearly recognizes his own defect has taken the first step towards removing that defect. To have a keen sense of limitation is to see clearly and to deal honestly with one's self; and clear vision and integrity are noble foundations upon which to build for a larger growth. The egotist often finds life comfortable, but he never finds it noble; the conceited man often enjoys himself, but he never makes self a synonym for spiritual compass and power. It makes living easy

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to be without consciousness of limitations, but it makes it spiritually stagnant and intellectually ignoble. Moreover, men never at heart respect the egotist, and they never take the conceited man at his own valuation.

To the most sincere and courageous there will come moments of depression and discouragement, times of weariness and exhaustion. In such moments our limitations, the sameness of our methods, the repetition of our phrases, the recurrence of certain dominant ideas, the inability to get away from what seems to be a stationary point of view, are so hard to endure that we are forced to decisive dealing with them; either we must succumb to the despair which envelops us like a cloud, or we must resolutely transform a painful experience into a source of strength and growth. A man is often haunted with the feeling that if he could break through the thin film which seems to separate him from masterful knowledge of the great realities and forces, he

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could achieve a success that would satisfy him, instead of having to be content with the success which satisfies others. In our highest moments we seem to be on the point of stepping across the invisible line of limitation which moves with us like a shifting horizon; but when the inspiration ebbs, the old lines grow painfully distinct. There is in strong men a deep craving for that final freedom which can come only with complete mastery of every kind of expression. The greatest artist knows not only the sharp limitations of his skill, but of his art. Let a man command every resource of his art, and he finds himself face to face with another set of limitations; he needs other arts in order to give his personality complete play and final expression. And if one could touch all the arts with the hand of a master, there would still be a pathetic disparity between the fathomless longings and capacities of the soul and all forms of human expression.

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The pain of limitation is not, therefore, the peculiar experience of those whose native gifts are not of the highest order and whose chances of culture have been rare and transient; it is the common trial of all who know themselves and are honest with themselves. Its root is not in permanence of imperfection, narrowness of range, and lasting rigidity of faculty; it is rather in the consciousness of great power inadequately developed, of superabundant energy not fully put forth. It is the pain of an immortal nature confined for a time within the narrow boundaries of mortal conditions. If a personality could be entirely unfolded in this mortal life, immortality would lose its noblest quality and its divinest hope. In the journey of life the eager feet of the traveller never reach the final summit; there are always higher peaks beyond. No faculty ever attains the last stage of growth; no talent ever bears its perfect fruit in performance; no soul ever touches the ultimate goal.

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Time is not long enough nor is this mortal life large enough to make room for the perfect unfolding of a soul. In the pain of conscious limitation lies the prophecy of continuous growth, the hope of that consummation for which all aspiration and sacrifice and endeavor are a divinely ordered preparation.

## Chapter XXII

### The Way of Work

**I**T is natural to revolt against the necessity of work; for work often seems to stand between a man and his highest development. If it were not for the necessity of being at certain places and doing prescribed tasks at fixed times, we are tempted to believe, we should find the life of the spirit more simple, more consistent, and more joyous. For work, at first glance, seems to be an interruption of the richest living; it compels us to fix our thoughts on materials and tools; it wearies the mind to such a degree that its freshness for spiritual things is largely spent; it forces us into close association with our fellows. In the first stages of spiritual development, before we have learned the greatest and most diffi-

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cult of all the lessons set for the spirit of man in this world, we dream of the joys of a life detached from toil and time and men, and given up wholly to thoughts of God. If it were not for the coil of duties and tasks which necessity binds about us, we imagine we should run the race set before us with shining faces and eager feet. There would be no clouds to obscure the radiant day ; no weariness of spirit and body ; no loss of freshness of feeling for the things which make for our peace.

If God would permit us to come to him by some straight path and not by all these devious ways ! If he would shine full upon our souls, instead of obscuring the light of his countenance by intercepting mists ! So men have thought ; and have tried to make the order of their going to God accord with their thought. They have gone out of the working world ; they have denied its claims upon their time and strength, loosened the ties that bound them to it, cast off their dear-

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est associations, and given themselves up, in silence and solitude, to unbroken meditation upon God. To some bruised and weary spirits peace has come with seclusion; but to the sound, strong, and normal human spirit such efforts to get outside the order of man's life in this world have disastrously failed. He who cannot find God in the labors and stir of the world cannot find him in the solitude of deserts or the quietness of monasteries.

Work cannot be evaded without serious spiritual loss; for work is the most general and the most searching method of education to which men are subject. A process which is educational in a way at once so deep and rich must, in the nature of things, form part of the spiritual order of life; for education is always spiritual in its results. Christ's life among men was one of toil; he was bred to a trade, and practised it; his labors were manifold and continuous; and in word, deed, and habit he identified himself with those who work. Many of his



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most beautiful parables grew out of his familiarity with the tasks of the shepherd and husbandman ; many of the deepest truths he gave to his disciples were made real and comprehensible by the imagery of the working life in the fields and at home ; and when he said, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," he not only gave a divine sanction to work, but he made it a part of the divine life. The revelation of a working God brought a new conception of the divine nature into human thought ; a conception which is beginning to make its profound significance clear and victorious. A God at work carries with it the conception of a God who is identified with that vast movement of life in nature and in society of which man is part. The thought of God at work sheds a marvellous light on nature and on life ; it makes history a continuous revelation of God's will and purpose ; it identifies all the great forces which sustain the universe with the power that streams from him ; it invests the

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whole movement of life with the beauty and dignity of a divine presence and a divine order.

It is not many years since men conceived of the physical universe as the fixed and completed product of a creative power put forth in some remote past, and of history as a record which had once been inspired, but from which the radiance had faded. God had finished the making of the world and withdrawn himself; he had completed the disclosure of his nature to Abraham, David, and Isaiah, and had ceased to speak to men; he had guided Moses in such a way that men could follow the signs of his presence, but he had left Washington and Lincoln to find a path through the waste and storm as best they could.

When Christ declared that his Father worked, and that he worked, he destroyed this false conception root and branch, and flooded the world with the presence and power of the Infinite. For work involves the idea of incompleteness; when a thing

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is finished, there is an end of work upon it. A working God means an incomplete and growing world; an order of things which has not reached its perfection, but is still moving on to ends not yet attained. And this suggests the deeper meaning of the great process which we call work. It is not, as we are tempted to believe, a mere putting forth of strength, in order that certain external ends may be accomplished, and certain visible products of skill and toil brought into being; it is the expression and passion of a full, deep, rich life. It does not consist in dealing with materials and in making specific things; it binds a man to his fellows, sets him in the spiritual order of society, teaches him all those lessons which are primary in the experience of the race because they are necessary to the safety and sanity of the race — temperance, industry, honesty, truthfulness, patience; provides him with the forms of activity which develop his nature and appease his craving for expression; and puts him in

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the way of bringing the full force of his personality to bear on the world and his fellows.

The religious life not only has its temptations, but those temptations are peculiarly insidious and subtle. The story of the anchorite is often a story of unusual solicitation to some form of evil. To get away from the interruption of work is not, alas! to follow Christ with swift and victorious feet; it is to invite the approach of the most serious spiritual perils. The desire to get beyond the reach of the calls which life makes upon men, in order that one may hear only the voice of God, often has its root in selfishness; for one may even long for fellowship with God for selfish reasons. To long to be with God because one is tired of being in the world, revolts against its demands, and resents its intrusion of its own claims, is a much lower motive than the passion for companionship with the one perfect realization of holiness and righteousness. One may long for God

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for the satisfaction of his own soul, or one may long for God because he longs to yield himself utterly and finally to the will of the Infinite; and between these two kinds of longing there is a vast reach of spiritual development.

The way of work is the way of discipline, training, education, and growth. If one could seek God as one finds a friend, by passing through a single door, one would not know him even in his presence; for to know God one must first learn many things. The world has always been full of men and women before whose eyes God was daily passing, but they did not see him; Christ came, lived, spoke, and died among men, and even his own received him not. Going to God is not traversing a certain distance in space; it is accomplishing a certain growth of the spirit. For God is never far to seek, though so many fail to find him.

## Chapter XXIII

### Love of Country

**P**ATRIOTISM has been a passion with the finest spirits in every age. No sacrifice has been too great if the country asked it; no task too heavy, no duty too dangerous. In all times and among every people there have been base spirits who were more ready to make their country serve them than to serve it; who were eager to turn every great crisis to their personal advantage, and to make public necessity an occasion of private gain. It has been said that during the Civil War the Government of the United States paid four dollars for every dollar's worth of material or service which it used or received; and there are always many who treat a great National experience as a great

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commercial opportunity ; whose thoughts are with the markets rather than with the men on the seas and in the field, and who are dumb, blind, cold, and selfish in the presence of one of those historical movements which appeal with irresistible power to the generous, the open-minded, and the patriotic. Baseness and meanness will continue to stain the noblest causes so long as men are willing to be base and mean ; and the innate vulgarity and cowardice of these qualities are never so striking as when they stand out against the white background of a great and generous devotion. Every great crisis has uncovered the hideousness of selfishness, but it has also uncovered the beauty of self-sacrifice. There are many who made fortunes in the Civil War, but the baseness of sordid contractors and the stony indifference of speculators are lost in the record of heroism, self-forgetfulness, and of that generous devotion which scorns to count the cost.

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There is nothing nobler in men than their innate possibilities of courage. In any crisis among intelligent people all demands on heroism are promptly met. This has always been true of the nobler races in their relations to country. There has been something in the idea of country which has appealed to the highest qualities of the best men and women. They have given fortune and life, not only with unhesitating cheerfulness, but with a noble joyfulness of spirit. In every national crisis there have been those who have counted it a privilege to die for country. The story of every noble race is a record of heroism ; great deeds shining from time to time like stars in a night of unheroic moods and pursuits ; splendid achievements redeeming periods of greed and gain ; lofty devotion blazing like a sudden torch when the soul of honor seemed to be eaten out by selfishness. Again and again, when the nobler soul of a race has seemed to be sinking under the tempta-



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tions of luxury and pleasure, the call of the country in some sudden peril has rung like the note of the bugle over a sleeping garrison, and on the instant the soul has faced again the great realities of duty and sacrifice with an heroic front.

Like all the great passions and devotions, love of country is, in the last analysis, instinctive. It is in the truest sense rational, and, pursued to its sources, discloses the most commanding sanctions of the intellect and of the moral sense; but no passionate love of country was ever yet grounded upon a process of reasoning; it has its roots deep in the soil of the spiritual nature. Men feel the divine quality in the State even when they do not recognize it; as men feel the divine element in the family even when they fail clearly to discern it. There is something sacred and incommunicable in one's country. The conception is, in a sense, abstract; and yet nothing seems more real and nothing is more commanding. The soil, the land-

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scape, the government, the magistrates, the capital, represent but do not express this great conception of an invisible order which, being not only unseen but indefinable, speaks to the soul with the finality of supreme authority. Architecture, art, literature, ceremonial, and symbolism have striven in vain to give form and substance to this elusive and dominating idea. It has a thousand homes, but it was never brought under roof of human making ; a thousand eloquent voices have appealed to it in words which are immortal, but it has never spoken ; a thousand thousand men have died for it, but it remains sublimely silent ; as if sacrifice and service and devotion and beauty were its own by virtue of eternal possession. And in this very elusiveness lies the greatness and significance of the conception. If it had a material form, it might be corroded and tarnished ; if this transcendent soul had a visible body, it might be corrupted and debased ; but, being essentially a spiritual ideal, it is be-

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yond the touch of time and change and death. Men die for it, but it remains imperishable.

It has been well said that the ideals of men are the realities of God ; and country is one of those ideals. If society were of human origin and the State of human making, there would be something pathetic in this passionate surrender of the noblest spirits to an idea which is never at any time radiantly victorious in social and political conditions. The State in its practical working is never without stains ; even in the noblest periods of public life there are still visible in the organized life of a great society those imperfections which are never absent from the struggles and achievements of men. And there are times in the history of every people when the worst vices are thrown into startling relief by the corruption and inefficiency of political leaders. On the side of organization the State is human, and is never wholly free from the imperfections of human nature ;

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but in origin and function the State is divine, and, however men may obscure its shining, that divinity is never wholly lost. All the great institutions—the Family, the Church, and the State—reveal the divine order under which society is constituted, and the divinely guided education by which society is being slowly trained in those great qualities of character which are the foundation of civilization and of individual liberty, growth, and happiness. The State, so often degraded by the selfishness and folly of its citizens, still silently does God's work in the world and administers his government.

It is this element of the divine in the organized life of a people which gives the conception of country such power over the noblest imaginations, such depth of root in the greatest hearts. In this conception all the range and vastness and complexity of the life of a people are gathered up and symbolized: past history, illustrious characters, noble achieve-

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ments, immortal heroisms, churches, schools, art, architecture, landscape, soil, commerce — the fathomless stream of the historic life of a race pours all its treasures of memory, resource, possession, and possibility into this sublime conception. No other idea which dominates men stands for more that makes life great and imperishable. If there were no element of divinity in the origin and function of the State, the glory of human achievement and the pathos of human suffering which are bound up in it would make it sacred to all who have a care for the things of the spirit.

In the degree in which one sees the spiritual significance of institutions will he love his country. In that love there is no selfishness ; it is the only preparation which trains a man to love humanity in all countries. He who feels no passionate devotion to his own country will never care for the world ; as he who does not love his own family will never love the community. The beginning of love

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for one's neighbors is love for one's kin, and the beginning of love for the race is love for one's country; "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" All noble and sound cosmopolitanism of spirit is rooted in love of one's country. He who is not stirred out of selfishness by the thought of the depth and beauty and pathos of the life of his own people will never enter into true communion with the life of the race.

Over all individual lives shines this conception of the life which includes all lesser lives; over all individual duties rises always this supreme duty; over all individual aims and gains stands this sublime ideal of the final authority of the divine and imperishable element in human society. When it speaks, all other voices become silent; when it commands, all loyal hearts obey; to die at its bidding is better than to live for one's self.

## Chapter XXIV

### Bearing the Burden

**O**NLY once or twice in the record of the life of Christ are we made aware of his own burdens. What those burdens were we can discern even when we cannot comprehend: loneliness of spirit, the deep repulsion of a perfectly pure nature in an impure society, the solitude of a great love in an unloving world, the sense of isolation, the pain of rejection, the anguish of betrayal, the pains of death. That these burdens were heavier than man ever bore before or has carried since becomes more clear as we are able to read the consciousness of the Son of God as it unfolded under the conditions of human life. There must have been times when the moral anguish of Christ was measured only by the

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distance between his ideals of purity and righteousness and the standards of the society about him. When the man of refined instinct and delicate training is compelled to live in the unspeakable physical and moral conditions of the most degraded poor in modern cities, his soul and body cry out in revolt; every breath in such a polluted air is torture. What must have been the suffering of the sinless and stainless Christ in a world blackened with sin, blasted with hate and malice, foul with all moral uncleanness? We may look at this burden among the many which Christ bore, but we cannot really look into it; there were depths in that experience which we cannot sound.

Of all this burden-bearing how little is said! In divine silence the divine sufferer endures; and only one or twice, when the blackness of darkness is upon him, does the anguish of the great spirit become audible. Add to these personal burdens the absence of that sense of



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fellowship which strengthens us when the load cuts deep, and the measure of the endurance of Christ becomes still more clear. Among all the men who followed and all the women who loved him there was not one who could give him real spiritual companionship. Among them all not one entered into the heart of his life; not one comprehended the nature of his trial. They gave him shelter; they hung upon his words; they gave him care and love; in the end they saw the divinity in him and died for him in victorious faith; but while he was with them not one broke the solitude of his inward life; no one gave him counsel, no one touched the secret of his sorrow with the divination of love; they were blind and dumb in the presence of his heaviest burden. And yet never, save in the last terrible hour, does he break the rule of divine reticence which he had imposed upon himself. He bore his own burdens in silence.

For the greatest of all the burden-

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bearers the world has ever known there was, however, the divinest of all refuges from personal sorrow : the bearing of the burdens of the world. He was no weary Titan bending beneath the weight of a sorrowful world ; his mighty load of care was borne, not only with the patience of a divine fortitude, but with the divine hopefulness of one who read the mystery of man's sorrow and saw at the heart of it a divine liberation and enrichment. There were many shadows which Christ did not strive to lift ; burdens which he did not endeavor to remove ; black mysteries which he did not attempt to explain. He knew their secret, but he could not reveal it because there were no words in human speech to contain it, and no reach of spiritual experience in those who heard him to interpret it. The limitation of our knowledge did not rest upon his insight, but upon his power of communication. He was like a wise man dealing with children ; his knowledge outran the boundaries of their understanding.

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He was silent about many things because, if he had spoken, we could not have understood him. But though he saw beyond the narrow limits of human knowledge, he seemed to feel the more deeply for those who suffered and could not understand why they suffered. His heart went out to the great multitudes shut in so often, in so many ways, by the mists of ignorance. He could not explain the divine purpose back of all human sorrow, but he could reveal the divine attitude toward the burden-laden world. He did not explain death and loss and human anguish, but in the crowded ways along which men walked in uncertainty and grief he seemed to be always saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." He bore our burdens and carried our sorrows, and yet he spoke with serene certainty of the love of God!

In the light of his life all lives must find their strength and peace; in his spirit all men who are eager to share the burdens of their fellows must find that cour-

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age which is the source of helpfulness. The despairing may sympathize, but they cannot assuage, inspire, or console. The deepest experience comes to those alone who drink of the cup which is held to the lips of humanity, who share the fortunes of the race. If a man stand apart from his fellows in some garden of ease and comfort, walled in from the highway along which the common sorrows pass, he may have some hours of peace and enjoyment, but he will never know what life means; he will never touch the sources of spiritual growth; he will never know what is in the depths of his own spirit. To shut one's self away from the cares of men is to miss that deeper education for which the spiritual order of the world stands. The end of living is not to escape experience, but to share it; and no experience is so deep and great as that which comes to the race in its griefs and cares. We escape from our own limitations in the exact measure in which we give ourselves up to spiritual fellowship

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with our race ; and there is no diviner privilege than the opportunity of bearing burdens which rest on the shoulders of others and of entering into the sorrows which pierce the hearts of others. In a national crisis the true citizen does not feel the less because he is not touched in person or property ; his heart bears the general anxiety as if it were a private burden. And the man who goes his own way in such an experience, without care or anxiety, not only reveals a shallow nature, but misses the chance of a great enrichment of his own life. There is no nobility in the man who is burdened only when he feels the weight on his own shoulders ; for we approach the stature of Christ in the exact measure in which we carry, with him, the burdens of the world.

We make those burdens lighter, and the sorrows of this mysterious experience we call life easier to bear, only as we share with him also the divine vision and hopefulness. It is always noble to bear the burdens of men, but we diminish those

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burdens only as we carry them with a faith which gives us courage and serenity. A sorrowful Christ would have won our hearts, but could not have delivered us. Deliverance involves a power greater than that required to bear the burden. The man whose courage is only sufficient to keep him in his place under the fire of the battery is brave, but he cannot be one of those leaders whose contagious heroism makes danger sweet and death companionable. If we are to help our fellows, we must not only share their fortunes; we must rise above them. Every hero inspires his followers with the faith that there is something for which life may wisely and well be surrendered; a gain for which death is not too great a price to pay. The true burden-bearer must feel the weight and pain; but he must also endure as if these sorrows of an hour were but the price of a strength and growth and vision in the final possession of which all sacrifices will seem small.

## Chapter XXV

### The Spirit of Helpfulness

**I**F the moods of society were clearly reflected in history, it would be found that periods of depression come to communities as they come to individuals, and that, at irregular intervals, the world sweeps into the shadow of low spirits and sometimes of despair. Looking back over the landscape of the past, there are, here and there over the surface, fog-banks and low-lying clouds which shut out the sunlight and breed all manner of spiritual disease. The man who despairs is an easy prey to temptation of every kind; for such a man has lost his way and is bewildered by the morass into which he has strayed. It is one of the peculiarities of men in a period of depression that they count their weakness

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strength, and regard the very absence of vitality which oppresses them as an evidence of superior intelligence. A buoyant, hopeful age is always aggressive, often turbulent, sometimes insolent; a despondent age is always self-satisfied, critical, scornful. Such an age looks back upon the enthusiasms of a more hopeful time with a pitying commiseration. It folds the scanty cloak of its own superiority about it and rejoices that it is no longer the victim of hopes, dreams, and illusions. Laying hold of one side of experience, it preaches a cheap and thin philosophy of cautious and selfish moderation.

A large part of the world has been passing through such a period of depression for the last two decades; in art, literature, philosophy, and politics the prevailing note has been critical, skeptical, and cynical. A fog has hung over a large section of society, and has so long obscured the sun that men have begun to question whether there is any sun. The philoso-



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phy of disenchantment has been accepted not only as if it were final but as if it were noble ; so great is the skill of the mind in making darkness take the place of light when the solid highway of sanity, morality, and generous ideals is forsaken ! Far-seeing men have known that society was lying under a fog which some morning wind would suddenly sweep beyond the horizon ; but there have been many who have insisted that fog is the natural envelope of the earth, and that to live in a mist which distorts all objects and chills the very soul is the highest of all privileges. That fog is already perceptibly thinner ; sensitive minds feel the warmth of approaching sunshine ; there is a rising tide of vitality and hope in the arts. Naturalism, cynicism, and skepticism have had their turn ; the world has gone through its bad quarter-of-an-hour ; God is becoming credible again, because the vision of society is beginning to clear.

It ought to be cut into the memory of humanity that depression is never the

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normal mood of healthy men ; it is always the evidence of disease. When a man begins to take low views of himself and of his fellows, instead of comforting himself with the feeling that he is becoming emancipated from the weakness of lesser men, let him consult a wise physician, diet himself, and take more time for exercise. Such a man needs the open air and the sunlight. Depression is always the result of intellectual, spiritual, or physical exhaustion ; it marks the ebb of the tide ; it stamps a period as inferior in vitality and a society as defective in creative power. The art of such a time may show signs of power here and there, but it is never sound, well-balanced, progressive ; it is always morbid, inharmonious, and retrogressive ; it tends constantly to run into all manner of excesses and extravagances. It is the art of a Verlaine, not of a Tennyson.

There is a superficial optimism which is neither rational nor wholesome ; a mere sensuous content which affirms that all

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things are as they ought to be because its own comfort is secure. There are men whose cheerfulness does not count, because it is purely a matter of temperament; such men would smile over a wrecked universe. Against this easy-going, good-natured mood, which accepts "rings" and "bosses" in politics as necessary evils and will not fight them to the death as the deadly enemies of society; which sits content in a social order full of injustice because it is more comfortable to let things alone; which tolerates low standards, easy morals, cheap education, and vulgar manners; it is the bounden duty of all right-minded men to protest, in season and out of season. This false optimism is, if possible, worse than pessimism, because it obliterates moral distinctions and cheapens the idea of God; and it is better to reject the idea of God than to vulgarize it. But this easy-going, good-natured acquiescence in things as they are must not for a moment be confounded with true optimism: the belief

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in a divine order being worked out in an imperfect world, in a divine salvation being wrought out in a sinful race. The true optimist is often at one with the pessimist in affirming that, at the moment, conditions could not be worse ; but he instantly parts company with the pessimist by adding that there is a power in the world which can make them better, and a capacity in man to co-operate with that power.

Pessimism has its roots in atheism ; its essence is disbelief in God and in man. It sees the disorder in the world, and doubts the existence of an eternal order ; it sees the lawlessness in society, and questions the reign of law ; it sees the confusion of society, and doubts the possibility of the higher unity. Its sorrow over the evil among men is easily changed to scorn, because it disbelieves in the possible purity of men ; its pity changes into contempt, because it has no sympathy. The curse of pessimism is its blindness ; it sees the immediate condition,

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but it does not see the possibilities of redemption. It recognizes the evil deed, but it has no insight into the depths of the human soul. It is without pity and without sympathy, and it is smitten, therefore, with permanent sterility ; it can call attention to injustice and unrighteousness, but it can offer no remedies ; it can bring sin home to the conscience, but it has no power of redemption. If Christ had been a pessimist, the mighty power which has flowed from him to the ends of the earth would not have touched his nearest follower. There is neither heart, help, nor hope in pessimism ; it is, at the best and in its purest condition, a blind protest against wrong.

At the heart of all really constructive movements in society lie two qualities : sympathy and faith. Without these qualities it is possible to discourage men, but not to help them. Much moral force has been wasted in this country of late years because many of those who rightly revolted against the low standards

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of our public life made their protest in a cynical spirit; they sneered and scoffed where they ought to have rekindled hope and enthusiasm. George William Curtis was a noble example of that far-seeing optimism which, in boldly attacking present abuses and exposing evil and corrupt methods, reinspired hope in the integrity of the people and the possibility of political reformation. Mr. Curtis sympathized profoundly with his countrymen, and had an unshaken faith in them; his voice had, therefore, a note of confidence and cheer. Too many of those who stood with him in his fight against the rule of "machines" and that blind partisanship which is the worst enemy of parties have been willing to denounce, but have not been able to lead, because they had no faith; and without faith there is no leadership. They have been sterile critics instead of fruitful reformers. Society needs keen, sharp, courageous criticism; but it must be the criticism of the friend, not of the cynic.

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There is place for the pessimist in the arraignment of the world for its sins, but no place for him in its redemption. It is impossible to redeem a man unless one has faith in him. And it ought to be added that faith in God and in man is not only the beginning of happiness, but of sound judgment and practical wisdom and genuine human happiness.

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## Chapter XXVI

### Courage the Only Safety

**T**HE duty of measuring one's power accurately in accepting responsibilities is often illustrated by the disasters which overtake those who fail to gauge their ability to endure or to achieve ; but it is nobler to fail through excess of courage than through cowardice. Those who sit well housed, well warmed, and well fed often commend themselves as discreet users of opportunity and successful solvers of the problems of living, when, as a matter of fact, they are leaving the doors of opportunity unopened and evading the problems of life. Success in dealing with life consists in resolutely closing with it and measuring one's self fearlessly against its greatest forces. Harbours are for unused ships ; the craft



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that forwards the interests of commerce must live on the high sea. What we call life, which is only another name for experience, is to be sought, not evaded; and he is happiest, not who gains and keeps the most, but who has the widest opportunity of sounding the depths of experience, and of pouring out the entire force of his personality through thought, feeling, and activity. There is a very superficial philosophy behind the aphorism so often quoted: "Happy the people without a history." A man without a history is a power which has never been developed, a force which has never been applied, a world of possibilities which has never been explored and organized.

The fortunate races are not "knitters in the sun," lotus-eaters by the river of life; they are rather the road-makers, the sea-farers, the city-builders, the light-bringers. They are the Greeks, the Jews, the English, the French; not the Eskimos, the Patagonians, the Thibetans.

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Living at ease, without care, responsibility, or sorrow, untouched by sadness and unvisited by calamity, involves escape, not from pain and loss, but from growth, education, power, and leadership. To avoid the discomforts of travel by hugging one's own fireside is to miss some of the richest sources of pleasure which life offers, and some of its most searching educational influences. To keep out of the path of sorrow by keeping clear of close human relationships is to put into a safe place, without possibility of increase, a little patrimony which might have grown into a vast fortune. It is better to lose, with Dante, the lesser comforts if at such a price one may learn the great secrets of the human soul in its unfathomable experiences.

Fear in all its forms is a kind of atheism. The man who is afraid has lost his faith ; he no longer believes in God. If this world were in the hands of an evil spirit, as some savage peoples have believed, fear would be logical and inevi-

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table; but in a world of God's making there is no room for it. For the essence of fear is the feeling that something which we do not understand or cannot control may do us harm. If we were the victims of a malign creative power, or the products of an impersonal cosmic system, or the tenants at will of a house which had no owner, a world which had no maker, we might wisely shield ourselves behind every possible precaution against peril. Many people go through life as if they were dependent on their own sagacity for safety; they choose their way like a picket-line through woods full of sharpshooters. They suspect every tree and rock in the path; they are always anticipating some kind of evil; they are beset with forebodings, consumed with anxieties, oppressed by apprehension. They live as if surrounded by invisible foes; as if the universe were hostile and life inimical to happiness. The ancients believed that the gods were envious of the good fortune of man, and that the pros-

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perous man must hide the evidences of his prosperity.

This attitude of excessive caution and suspicion would be wise if the devil were God ; but, God being what he is, it is supreme folly. The universe is not against us, it is for us ; as fast as we come to understand its laws they become our ministers. Life is not unfriendly ; in the exact degree in which we make ourselves its pupils does it teach, nurture, and develop us. There is always the possibility of what we call disaster : the sudden interruption of our plans, the unexpected shattering of our hopes, the anguish of sorrow and loss ; but there are also great consolations, divine hopes ; there are God and immortality. The difficulty is not with the great order of life, but with our inability to comprehend that order. We act as if we were alone in the world, fighting a solitary battle against an invisible foe ; as a matter of fact, there is no unseen foe, and our only battle is with ourselves. The interrup-

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tion of our plans is often their real fulfilment ; what seems to be a final loss is often a supreme gain ; even our afflictions, in the full reach of life, are “ for the moment.” Demosthenes thought the life of Athens at an end when Philip conquered ; not discerning that the breaking of the vase was to fill the world with the fragrance of that which it imprisoned. In national sorrows the seeds of national greatness are often sown ; in personal losses, which at the time seem crushing in their severity, the foundations of spiritual prosperity are often laid. Many a man looks back and thanks God for the events in his life which once seemed disastrous, but which, in the clearer light of time, disclose the beauty of noble opportunity. We are continually closing the doors against the angels of opportunity because they wear a garb that seems menacing or repellent to us.

That which justifies courage in facing the possibilities of life is the conviction that its master is our Lord as well ; that

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it is so framed that "all things work together for good" to those who are obedient to the laws of life; that our little plans are embraced in a greater and wiser plan; that "light is sown for the righteous," the mysterious future silently beckoning us forward into paths that seem dark and ominous but which end on the summits of the mountains. He who distrusts, holds back, and fears, misses the great opportunity and loses the noble achievement; he who trusts and dares plucks the flower of victory out of the very jaws of death. In such a world as this courage is the only safety; the coward is lost. There is no possible retreat and no place where one can hide himself; safety lies in pushing resolutely on through storm and darkness and danger. These are but the shadows on the path; for the brave they have no real existence. In such a world he who takes God at his word and ventures most is most cautious and far-seeing; and the more daring the faith, the greater the

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certainty of achievement. "God being with us, who can be against us?" It is our part to welcome responsibility, to crave the difficult work, to seek the dangerous duty ; for these are our divinest opportunities of service and growth.

## Chapter XXVII

### The Incompleteness of Life

ONE source of the feeling of depression which sometimes settles down over society and, like a penetrating mist, drives people into their places of refuge and inclines them to sit by the fire rather than to climb the hills or explore the woods, is the reaction from hopes that were set too high. A man's hopes must be as rational as his acts ; they must rest on reality and be harmonized with existing conditions. One may dream as he pleases, for dreams may lie outside the sphere not only of the actual but of the possible ; a man ought to hope, however, for those things only which lie within his reach. That reach may be immensely extended, and hope involves this enlargement of reach rather than those



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magic happenings which bring fortune, fame, and influence to our doors. A rational hope ought to rest in the expectation that one may have the strength to pursue and overtake these difficult and elusive rewards, rather than in the expectation that they will seek him out. For hope involves the possibility of realization, and must be shaped, therefore, by the molding touch of an intelligent purpose.

Men are prone to disregard this law and to transform their dreams into hopes; and when these dreams are shattered by a rude awakening, they inveigh against the order of life, and permit themselves to sink into the slough of depression. As a matter of fact, they have not suffered any real disappointment; what has happened has not been a denial of their desires, but the disclosure of the unreality of those desires. They never had any basis of reality, and their satisfaction would have involved a violation of the laws of life. If a man hopes for noble

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successes, and disciplines and educates himself to secure them, and they elude him, he suffers a disappointment which is real and full of an inevitable pain; the man, on the other hand, who hopes for the highest things, but takes no step towards them, suffers no real disappointment when they fail him, because he never had the right to hope for them. No man has a right to hope for things which he does not earn, and no wise man strives to earn things which are clearly out of his reach; the blind man cannot hope to paint pictures, the dumb man to sing, or the lame man to run; and no man has ground for disappointment if things which he has not earned, or cannot earn, do not come to him. True hope is like the light which streams from the lantern one carries in his hand; it shines in advance of his steps, but one who is swiftly walking constantly overtakes it.

Most of the reactions which tinge the spirit of society with gloom are irrational,

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because they have their source in the denial of groundless hope. When Wordsworth first came under the spell of that great revolutionary movement which swept sensitive minds all over Europe into sympathy with France at the close of the last century, he shared the general expectation that the age of liberty, fraternity, and equality was at hand; and when, after the short era of good will and popular fêtes and enthusiastic addresses to abstract virtues, the Terror came, like a swift and awful tragedy usurping the place of a sweet and tranquil pastoral, the poet, and a host of men of kindred purity of soul, lost heart and hope, and went sorrowfully back to the old political and social order. As a matter of fact, there never was any ground for the hopes of those who believed that the overthrow of the old régime meant the sudden perfection of society. These hopes fastened upon the ultimate spiritual results of political education, and the French people were only battering down

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the doors which had heretofore shut them out of the elementary school of self-government. The hope of sudden regeneration was formed in entire disregard of the laws of growth and of life; and was not only doomed to denial from the very start, but ought to have been denied. Society suffers much from the crudity of its organization and the venality and incompetency of those who assume to lead and govern it; but it would suffer more if it could, on the instant, set itself right; it would lose that education which is of far greater importance than the attainment of specific results, however noble.

Our hopes are often in direct antagonism to our higher interests, because their realization would eliminate the training which prepares us to use gifts, rewards, and gains of every kind. Nothing could be more unfortunate for a boy than the sudden acquisition of knowledge. If knowledge could be gained by speculation, as fortunes are often made, it would

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become as vulgar and useless as such fortunes usually are. For the best part of education is not the deposit of information which it leaves in a man's mind, but the concentrated and intelligent force into which it merges all that is strongest and best in a man's nature. The process through which the boy is compelled to pass in order to gain knowledge prepares him to use knowledge wisely when he finally gets it. Fortunes which are slowly accumulated are not often vulgarly spent or foolishly wasted; the discipline of industry and frugality gives poise and sobriety.

In permitting ourselves to hope, we need to remind ourselves that this is a life of preparation rather than of accomplishment, of processes rather than of finalities, of growth rather than of ultimate achievement. Rational hope in the heart of a man whose place is in a great workshop is very different from hope in the heart of a man who has finished his education and has a right to

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seek his own ends. No man is free to seek his own ends in this life, because he is in the educational stage; he is here to be trained, not to be free to choose ultimate courses. In a great workshop there is always a certain tumult; the air is never free from dust; the eye never rests on things that are finished, because the finished products are instantly removed. Every human being is in the process of being formed; no one is ever perfectly formed. Society is made up of these unfinished and incomplete personalities; it has never yet produced a perfect personality. Everywhere, among people of every condition, through countless instrumentalities of necessity, toil, trade, art, travel, schools, politics, literature, chiefly through those greatest of instruments the family, the Church, and the State, men are being molded, developed, educated. Life is a vast school; what a man is or does after graduation no one has told us with any detail.

Every method of work and every stage

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of attainment with which life makes us familiar is strictly preparatory; and yet we are continually hoping for final results, for ultimate perfection, and are swift to cry out against the order of things, and even to accuse God of trifling with us, when those hopes are denied! There is a sense in which we expect too much of ourselves and of others. Most of our criticism of others is either idle or unjust, because it does not take into account the obstacles overcome and the progress accomplished. The real question with a man never is, "How nearly does he approach perfection?" but, "How far has he travelled on his way toward perfection?" Some men, who are still far from the goals, have already made a wearisome journey. And such men have often done more than those who seem to be within touch of the goals. The teacher's deepest interest is not always in the student whose recitations are most accurate; it is oftener in the boy whose record is lower by reason of

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lesser opportunities, but who is steadily moving to the front. The only true measure of a man's success in this life is to be found in the growth he has made, not in the achievements he has put to his credit. The chief value of these achievements is the evidence they furnish of growth.

It is an imperfect world because it is a divine world. If life as we now know it were complete, then the ultimate measure of success would be at hand, and our judgments of ourselves and others might have finality. But life as we now know it is part of a whole which lies, in its completeness, beyond our vision. There is not room enough in the greatest human career to develop and express all there is in a man's nature; in the case of the most noble and masterful career nothing is accomplished beyond personal growth and a contribution to the growth of society. The most encouraging and consoling fact about life is that very incompleteness which men are so often



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tempted to deplore. The real basis of hope is in the possibilities of growth which are inherent in every personality and in all society, and not in any perfection of attainment now or in the future. Society will move toward perfection, but will never touch the goal, because the goal will constantly recede as men advance; that is one of the supreme joys of immortality.

## Chapter XXVIII

### A Spiritual Opportunity

**T**O keep work fresh and joyous one must keep constantly in mind its spiritual significance. Work is one of the chief instrumentalities in the education of the human spirit ; for it involves both self-realization and the adjustment of self to the order of life. Through effort a man brings to light all that is in him, and by effort he finds his place in the universal order. Work is his great spiritual opportunity, and the more completely he expresses himself through it the finer the product and the greater the worker. There is an essential unity between all kinds of work, as there is an essential continuity in the life of the race. The rudest implements of the earliest men and the divinest creations of

## A Spiritual Opportunity

the greatest artists are parts of the unbroken effort of humanity to bring into clear consciousness all that is in its soul, and all that is involved in its relationship with the universe. The spiritual history of the race is written in the blurred and indistinct record of human energy and creativeness, made by the hands of all races, in all times, in every kind of material. Work has emancipated, educated, developed, and interpreted the human spirit; it has made man acquainted with himself; it has set him in harmony with nature; and it has created that permanent capital of force, self-control, character, moral power, and educational influence which we call civilization.

Work has been, therefore, not only the supreme spiritual opportunity, but the highest spiritual privilege and one of the deepest sources of joy. It has been an expression not only of human energy but of the creativeness of the human spirit. By their works men have not only built homes for themselves in this

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vast universe, but they have co-operated with the divine creativeness in the control of force, the modification of conditions, the fertilization of the earth, the fashioning of new forms. In his work man has found God, both by the revelation of what is in his own spirit and by the discovery of those forces and laws with which every created thing must be brought into harmony.

The divine element in humanity has revealed itself in that instinct for creativeness which is always striving for expression in the work of humanity; that instinct which blindly pushes its way through rudimentary stages of effort to the possession of skill; slowly transforming itself meanwhile into intelligence, and flowering at last in the Parthenon, the Cathedral at Amiens, the Book of Job, Faust, Hamlet, the Divine Comedy, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Wagner's Parsifal, Rembrandt's portraits.

The ascent of the spirit of man out of the mysterious depths of its own con-

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sciousness to these sublime heights of achievement is the true history of the race ; the history which silently unfolds itself through and behind events, and makes events comprehensible. In the sweat of his brow man has protected and fed himself ; but this is but the beginning of that continuous miracle which has not only turned deserts into gardens and water into wine, but has transformed the uncouth rock into images of immortal beauty, and the worker from the servant of natural conditions and forces into their master.

Men still work, as their fathers did before them, for shelter and bread ; but the spiritual products of work have long since dwarfed its material returns. A man must still work or starve in any well-ordered society ; but the products of work to-day are ease, travel, society, art ; in a word, culture. In that free unfolding of all that is *in* man, and that ripening of knowledge, taste, and character which are summed up in culture, work

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finds its true interpretation. A man puts himself into his work in order that he may pass through an apprenticeship of servitude and crudity into the freedom of creative power. He discovers, liberates, harmonizes, and enriches himself. Through work he accomplishes his destiny, and one of the great ends of his life is to make himself skilful and creative ; to master the secrets of his craft and then pour his spiritual energy like a great tide into his work. The master worker learns that the secret of happiness is the opportunity and the ability to express nobly whatever is deepest in his personality, and that supreme good fortune comes to him who can lose himself in some generous and adequate task.

The last word, however, is not task, but opportunity ; for work, like all forms of education, prophesies the larger uses of energy, experience, and power which are to come when training and discipline have accomplished their ends and borne their fruit.

## Chapter XXIX

### Thanksgiving

**M**EN are prone to thank God for those prosperities of vine and meadow and shop and ship which make life easy and comfortable; but they are rarely grateful for those divine happenings which make life difficult and great. Times and seasons for special thanksgiving are wise and necessary; for men need to be reminded of what they have received, and they need to have provision made for the special expression of their gratitude; but the grateful man does not depend on days and festivals for his thought of God's goodness and care for him; these thoughts are always with him, and the song of thanksgiving is always in his heart. Grace before meat is not an empty repetition of words; it is

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the phrase that forms on the lips out of the fulness of the heart. There are days so beautiful in their harmony of season, temperature, and light that when they dawn and we breathe the air of the radiant morning we say instinctively, "It is good to live." To be a part of the moving order of the world on such a day seems to be a sufficient reason for existence; we do not care to go behind the fact of life.

To one who sees the spiritual order of the world and recognizes the sublime chances of spiritual fortune which it offers, there is no need of special causes of gratitude; such a one thanks God daily that he lives. About him is the glory of the world which God's stars light and God's sun warms into fertility; around him are his brother men, needing his care, calling for his love, appealing for his service: let him stand where he will, there is a chance to be and to do, to live in the depths of the soul and to pour out the soul like a river for the refreshment of the world;



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around him are also ways without number of bearing the crosses of love and making its sacrifices; above him are the shining ones who, out of weakness such as his and in troubles and adversities like his own, have walked the way of life with steadfast fidelity and made that way luminous; before him, like a vast, half-seen avenue of some great city at night, stretches the path which grows more and more to the perfect day.

A man is specially and divinely fortunate, not when his conditions are easy, but when they evoke the very best that is in him; when they provoke him to nobleness and sting him into strength; when they clear his vision, kindle his enthusiasm, and inspire his will. The best moments in a man's life are often the hardest and the most perilous; but he thinks no more of personal discomfort and exposure than a thousand other brave men have thought of these things when the hour of destiny had struck. When the bugle rings across the field,

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the deadly line of fire that must be crossed is forgotten in the response to the duty which beckons from the heights above. Happy are they to whom life brings, not ease and physical comfort, but great chances of heroism, sacrifice, and service! The great ages have never been comfortable ages; they have demanded too much and given too much. The comfortable ages are those which neither urge a man to leave his fireside nor offer him great rewards if he does so; the great ages are those which will not let a man rest for the multitude of choices of works and perils they offer him. In easy, comfortable, money-making times men grow callous to suffering, dull of insight, sluggish of soul; in stirring, growing, stimulating times they draw in great breaths of mountain air, they are afield with the sun, consumed with eagerness to lavish the gift of life in one great outpouring of energy. One who knows what to be grateful for would thank God for Drake's chance to die, sword in hand, facing his

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foes half a world from home ; for Sidney's opportunity to pass on the cup of water to one whose thirst had less to assuage it ; for Livingstone's noble home-coming, borne in sorrow and silence out of the heart of the dark continent on the shoulders of men who could not measure his greatness but who revered his spirit.

For all sweet and pleasant passages in the great story of life men may well thank God ; for leisure and ease and health and friends may God make us truly and humbly grateful ; but our chief song of thanksgiving must be always for our kinship with Him, with all that such divinity of greatness brings of peril, hardship, toil, and sacrifice.

## Chapter XXX

### Intimations of the Unseen

**H**OW little of that which makes up life is visible or tangible! We habitually speak and act as if there were certain realities with which we are in such immediate contact that we constantly see and touch them; they exist beyond all question because their existence is evident to the senses. The man who is willing to accept nothing of the being and nature of which he has not ocular or tangible proof accepts these things as realities; all the rest he dismisses as dreams, or rejects as incapable of demonstration. And he does this, in many cases, because he believes that this is the only course open to one who means to preserve absolute integrity of intellect and to be entirely honest with himself

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and with life. A man of this temper is ready to believe only that which he thinks he knows by absolute contact ; there is much else he would like to believe, but he will not permit himself a consolation or comfort based on a hope which the imagination, or the heart or the mind working without regard for certain laws of evidence, which he arbitrarily makes, has turned into a reality. Many honest men go through life and will not see God because they have bolted all the doors through which God can enter and reveal himself.

Dr. Bushnell, in a moment of insight, once pictured to a friend with whom he was talking the making of man. And after man was made in His own image God said, "He is complete ;" and then He added : "No ; there is no way in which I can approach him. I will open the great door of the Imagination in his soul, so that I may have access to him." And this great door, which opens outward upon the whole sweep and splendor

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of the universe, some men bolt and bar as if it were an unlawful and illicit entrance to the soul ! They sit in the sublime theatre in which the drama of human life is being enacted, and insist that there is no stage because, for the moment, the curtain is down ! If there were a blank, impenetrable wall about us, we might bring ourselves to believe that there was nothing beyond its solid structure ; but that which closes us in to a certain range of clear knowledge and sense-perception is not an impenetrable barrier ; it is the thinnest of curtains ; impenetrable by the eye, but of such delicacy of fibre that the breath of mortality seems to draw it back for a moment, of such thinness of texture that it glows or darkens as if lights were being kindled or extinguished behind it. The intelligent man who looks at sunrise or sunset knows that there are other worlds than ours, and that the splendor of dawn and the tender glory of twilight are as real in the physical sense as the solid earth under his feet. In like man-

## Intimations of the Unseen

ner, and with equal conviction, he who lets himself see all that life reveals knows that the light which kindles and fades along the horizon-lines of the soul's life, day after day, shines from other suns than those which flood the vast abysses of space with splendor.

All the deeper realities of life are conveyed to us by intimation rather than by demonstration. They come to us by other roads than those of the senses. The persons to whom we are bound in the sweetest relationships or by the noblest compulsion are never really seen by us. We see and touch their garments; we never see or touch them. They may live with us in the closest intimacy, and yet no sense of ours ever made a path of final approach between us. When they vanish out of life, they leave behind them all that we ever saw or touched; but how pathetically unavailing is the appeal of the heart to the garment laid aside in the haste or pain of the final flight! All we ever saw is there, and yet it is nothing!

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That which we loved, and which made the world dear and familiar through the diffusion of its own purity and sweetness, we never saw or touched. It was never within the reach of our senses; it was accessible only to our spirits. So sacred was it that the final mystery was never dissipated; so divine was it that the final veil was never lifted. One came our way and dwelt with us in a tabernacle of flesh, even as Christ did, and then departed, leaving behind all that we ever saw or touched, and yet taking with her all that was real, companionable, comprehensible! And yet with this constant and familiar illustration of the presence of a reality which we never touch or see under our roof and by our side, we reject the intimations that come to us from every quarter and bring us the truths by which we live!

For we live in the things which are unseen and intangible, which we have never looked upon with our eyes nor grasped with our hands. We live by



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means of houses, food, raiment, warmth, exercise ; we travel, talk, amuse ourselves ; we employ a vast number of instruments for our pleasure and a host of agencies for our comfort. All these things we use and profit by ; but we live in and through none of them. We live in and through qualities, possessions, passions, convictions, and activities which are intangible and invisible. We live in and through love, faith, hope, duty, devotion, sacrifice ; these are the words which compass our deepest life, and make that life valuable and significant to us. The great struggles of the race have been for ideas and principles and sentiments ; the real bequests of the past are certain moral or intellectual qualities which instantly move over the horizon of the mind when the words Jew, Greek, Roman, are mentioned in our hearing. It is one of the divine mysteries of man's life in this world that, while he is always dealing with material things, struggling for them, storing them up, and counting

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himself rich or poor as he increases or diminishes them, he is ready at any moment to hold them as dust in the balances if the things he carries in his heart are in peril. He will open the dikes and destroy the country he has worked for centuries to create rather than suffer her enemies to possess her; he will sacrifice everything he has accumulated for the love of wife or child. Immersed in materialism, man is always at heart an idealist; putting his strength into the mastery and acquisition of things, he is always finding his life in ideas, emotions, convictions. He works with the material, but he lives in the spiritual. If the spiritual is withdrawn from him, he withers like a flower from which the light has departed.

If those with whom we live under the same roof are invisible, and the things which hold and sway us, as the moon controls the tides, are intangible, is it strange that God is not within the grasp of the hand, nor the realm of those who

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have laid aside the garments we once knew within the range of the eye? We pass through a room which is tenantless, but there is a flower in a vase, and straightway we know that one has been there. We go alone into a house, and immediately an unseen person stands beside us, evoked in memory by a thousand touches of the hand, a host of small, inanimate things which, through the disclosure of a selective principle, fill the house with manifold suggestions of an invisible personality. So to-day at Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives a figure stands beside the traveller whose hands no human hand has touched these many centuries; and in the vast universe which God made and through which he has passed, there are everywhere intimations of his presence, evidences of his care. We do not see him any more clearly than we see ourselves; but because he lives we live and because we live he must live.

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“What Nature for her poets hides,  
’T is wiser to divine than clutch.

The bird I list hath never come  
Within the scope of mortal ear ;  
My prying step would make him dumb,  
And the fair tree, his shelter, sear.

Behind the hill, behind the sky,  
Behind my inmost thought, he sings ;  
No feet avail ; to hear it nigh  
The song itself must lend the wings.

Sing on, sweet bird close hid, and raise  
Those angel stairways in my brain  
That climb from these low-vaulted clays  
To spacious sunshines far from pain.”

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“Long I followed happy guides,  
I could never reach their sides.  
. . . No speed of mine avails  
To hunt upon their shining trails.  
On and away, their hasting feet  
Make the morning proud and sweet ;  
Flowers they strew — I catch the scent ;  
Or tone of silver instrument  
Leaves on the wind melodious trace ;  
Yet I could never see their face.”

## Chapter XXXI

### Character and Fate

**T**HERE has always been a passionate protest in the heart of the race against that element in life which men call fate; the play upon unprotected natures of those events, accidents, calamities, which are beyond human control. These arbitrary happenings are often tragic in their consequences; they often seem wholly irrational; they have at times a touch of brutal irony. In many cases one is tempted to personify fate as a malignant spirit, studiously and with malicious cunning seeking ways of wounding, stinging, bruising, and poisoning the most sensitive souls. There have been human careers so completely distorted and thwarted that it has seemed as if the gods were jealous of men, and anx-

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ious to rob the great rewards of their sweetness and the noblest achievements of their fruit. So often are the prizes snatched from the strong hand that had grasped them that the Greek poets could not withdraw their gaze from that irony which at times appears to make human life the mere sport of the higher powers. The gods seemed to be mocking men by holding out glittering gifts and then suddenly snatching them away. And this play of what appears to be blind force still has its way in the world. The noblest cathedral is at the mercy of the earthquake; the divinest picture or poem may be turned to ashes in a brief quarter of an hour; the misplacing of a switch may wreck the most commanding intellect; a moment's inattention may break the happiest circle and cloud the fairest sky.

The conditions under which men live have remained unchanged except as human foresight and skill have changed them; but in that simple statement lies

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an immense change of point of view. There are still mysteries in the ordering of the world which have not been solved and probably are insoluble in this stage of development; but we have discovered that nature is our friend and teacher in the exact degree in which we learn her ways and co-operate with her. The area of what once appeared to be mere blind interferences with human activity and happiness steadily contracts; the area of beneficent and helpful relationship steadily widens. Men are now safe where they were once in peril; they are now masters where they were once servants. Through what seemed the play of mere physical force there now shines the light of that great movement upward which we call development; that sublime conception which, as one of the most spiritual thinkers of our generation has said, has come to light just in time to save some of the finest and most sensitive spirits from despair. For that conception not only involves a progressive order working in the

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place of what seemed to be blind force ; it involves also a progressive inclusion of all human interests in a system vast as the universe and old as eternity, and yet mindful of each soul's welfare and growth. A vision of order, slowly becoming clearer as all things work together for the good of those who obey, throws new light on what appeared to be the waste and sheer brutality of the past ; and where we do not understand, we can wait ; since we may rest in the assurance that we are not the victims of a merciless physical order nor the sport of those who have power but not righteousness, the willingness to hurt but not the wish to heal.

We are learning, also, that a very large part of the happenings and experiences which once seemed to come to men unsought are really invited, and are only the outward and visible fruits of inward dispositions and tendencies. Human responsibility is very much more inclusive than it appears to be at the first glance ; and men are far more completely



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the masters of their fate than they are prone to believe or confess. In fact, in any searching analysis the power of what we call fate shrinks to very small proportions. It is our habit to relieve ourselves of our own responsibility in small matters by invoking the bogey of bad luck, and in large matters by charging upon fate the ill fortune which we have brought upon ourselves. Many men and women suffer themselves to be comforted and deceived all their lives by these illusive agencies or specters of their own making. The results of their own blindness, carelessness, lack of judgment, neglect of opportunities, misleading egotism, are quietly and persistently put to the charge of luck or fate; and the self-fashioned sufferer takes another step in self-deception by drugging himself with that most enervating of all forms of consolation, self-pity. Hosts of men and women go through their lives without once looking their deeds in the face or seeing themselves with clear eyes. They

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comfort themselves with lies until they lose the power of sight ; they disown the fruits of their own sowing.

No words have pierced this demoralizing illusion with more searching force than the great phrase, "Character is destiny." When a man perceives that he is living in a world of absolute moral order, witnessed alike in the obediences and disobediences of men ; that what he reaps he has sown, and that he can and will reap nothing else ; that his career is shaped and framed by his own will ; that the great experiences which come to him for good or ill, for misery or blessedness, do not pursue him, but are invited by him ; that a man's spirit attracts the things which are congenial to it and rejects those which are alien — when a man perceives these things, he is in the way of honest living and of spiritual growth. Until he does see these facts and accept them, he deludes himself, and his judgment of life is worthless.

Few things are more significant than

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the slow and often unconscious building of a home for his spirit which every man carries to completion. When the birds build their nests, they have access to the same materials, but what different selections they make and how far apart their methods are! Every one who comes into life has access to substantially the same material; but each selects that which belongs to him. By instinct or by intelligence he builds his home with unerring adaptation to the needs and quality of his nature. To the pure all things are pure; to the impure all things are impure. The unselfish construct a beautiful order of service and helpfulness about them; the selfish make their own places. Honour and confidence and rectitude are in the air when the man of sensitive integrity appears; suspicion, mistrust, and doubt pervade the place where the man without character abides. Clean and comforting thoughts fly to the pure in heart; debasing fancies gather like fowl birds around the man whose imagination

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is a home of corruption. If we look deeply, a wonderful fitness reveals itself between those we know well and their several fortunes. Calamity may bear heavily upon them, but the moral world they construct for themselves out of the substance of their own natures is indestructible. Life is august and beautiful or squalid and mean as we interpret and use it; the materials are in all men's hands, and the selection and structure inevitably and infallibly disclose the character of the builder. As a beautiful woman furnishes her home until it becomes an externalization of her own ideals and qualities, and then fills it with the charm and sweetness of her own personality until it becomes a material expression of her own nature, so do we all silently, and for the most part unconsciously, form spiritual environments and fashion the world in which we live.

There are few sublimer promises in the Bible than that which the words, "Light is sown for the righteous," convey but

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cannot contain. This sublime phrase points the way to that complete freedom which the human spirit craves ; that final emancipation from the forces which it does not choose and cannot control, which marks the full maturity of spiritual development. It promises the gradual supremacy of the soul over all accidents, happenings, forces, and materials ; its final emancipation from all servitude. As life goes on, fate grows less and less, character grows more and more ; the fields become more completely our own, and yield nothing which we have not sown ; the correspondence between our spirits and our fortunes becomes more complete, until fate is conquered by and merged into character. In the long run a man becomes what he purposes, and gains for himself what he really desires. We not only fashion our own lives, but, in a very true sense, as Omar Khayyám intimates, we make heaven or hell for ourselves. It is idle to talk about luck, fortune, or fate ; these words survive from the child-

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hood of the race ; ~ they have historical interest, but they have no moral value to-day. No one can hide behind them or bring them into court as competent witnesses on his behalf. It is wise to face the ultimate truth which must sooner or later confront us : we make or mar ourselves, and are the masters of our own fates and fortunes.

## Chapter XXXII

### The Pains of Growth

**I**T is customary to speak of the period of youth as if it were one of unalloyed pleasure. To the man who finds his imagination becoming dull, his senses losing their zest, and the glow fading from the world, the years when prose ran easily into poetry and the commonplace was touched with romance lie in the past, beautiful in the vanishing morning light; their sorrows forgotten, their failures concealed, and nothing bequeathed to the memory save that which was fair and sweet. But youth has its clouds no less than age, its sorrows not less keen than those of maturity, its bitterness of baffled effort, and its anguish of repentance. Indeed, it is a question whether, to sensitive youth endowed with the great and

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perilous gifts of passion and imagination, there is not more of suffering and less of comfort than fall to the lot of the mature. There is, for all ardent young spirits, that pain of undeveloped and undirected force which is the pain of growth.

The very process of growth involves a certain kind of suffering from which no one who cares to live shrinks, but which is none the less real because not unmixed with joy. The eager traveller is never at rest until the end of his journey is in sight; it may be that the journey is far richer in interest and emotion than the place in which it ends, but no one whose wallet is strapped about his waist and whose staff is in his hand is ever content; there is always a feeling of restlessness, a half-conscious discontent, until travel ends in possession. In youth all things are yet to be achieved; nothing has been done; the goals are far distant; the sun is hardly above the horizon; the way is unknown. There is the elation of the first setting out, the freshness of the early



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day, the beauty of flowers still sweet with the dews and fragrance of the night, the consciousness of unused strength, the mysterious invitation of the future; but there are also the sense of detachment from all the things which surround one, the feeling of unreality which comes and goes and makes youth at times all action and at times all dreams, the uncertainty which has its roots in lack of adjustment between undeveloped powers and capacity and aptitude, and objects and aims and methods which are still undiscovered.

Through this beautiful, elusive, half-veiled world the young traveller moves with eager feet, uncertain of himself, of his future, of time and tide and fortune; longing for action and yet lost in dreams, in a world which seems to be as solid as rock and yet which recedes, dissolves, and forms anew as he advances. Then comes the long education which makes him master of himself and of the world through knowledge of his force and his limitation and of the reality and the un-

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reality of the things about him. His vision slowly becomes clear, his arm is strengthened for his toil, his hands are fitted to his work; he knows his place, his time, and his task; uncertainty vanishes and the landscape lies clear and sharply defined about him. And every stage in this complicated development of a personality and in its adaptation to its environment has been accomplished in pain and, at times, in anguish of spirit. When this harmony between the worker and the work has been secured, the pain of youth ceases; but the pain of growth — the pain of immortality — knows no cessation. The smaller world which the senses discern is explored and, in a way, mastered; but, blending with it in mysterious unity and separation, there grows upon the vision that other and vaster world in which the spirit seeks its home and to which it turns with increasing passion of need and hope as the years go by. The first adjustment, between the worker and the work, is soon accomplished; the

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second adjustment, between the spirit and the ends and aims and realities that are out of sight of the eyes but never beyond the vision of the soul, knows no completion. The youth hears all manner of enchanting voices as he goes on his way — voices that charm his ear and echo with a subtle resonance in his soul ; the man becomes aware more and more of the thinness of the veil which, like an exquisite, sensitive, magical web of seasons and songs and stars and occupations and tasks and experiences, hangs between him and the invisible — moved at times quietly and silently by the wind of mortality ; lighted sometimes as if luminous figures were stirring behind it ; darkened sometimes as if there were a sudden veiling of the glory within ; thin at times almost to the point of revelation, and dense at times as if it had become an impenetrable wall. In the life of the man there is this steady clearing of the vision ; this growing light in the uncertainty of the dawn ; this deepening consciousness

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of the spirit behind the form, the truth behind the fact, the power behind the symbol, the spiritual behind the material.

This putting on of immortality by mortality, this slow and silent disclosure of a larger world about the lesser one, this finer adjustment of the soul to two worlds which are never wholly harmonious, is accomplished through works, sorrows, visions, and experiences which are never free from pain. The way of life is always the way of the cross, because the possession of every higher perception involves the loss of a lower one, the gaining of every new conception of love the going of something dear and sweet and familiar, the forming of every spiritual tie the breaking of an earthly one. As we advance in the consciousness of spiritual realities we detach ourselves more and more from the things about us. All real living moves in a series of changes from a lower to a higher conception of the relation, the work, or the possession; and all change in the ways and things we

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love is full of pain. It is this silent but compelling power in the world, steadily driving us forward, which evidences the presence of divinity in the ordering of our lives. Nothing which comes into our hands quite satisfies us; for noble possession always involves spiritual recognition of the gift, and with spiritual perception comes a new sense of values and obligations. Nothing satisfies because nothing is complete or finished; neither our capacity for receiving nor the gift which is bestowed upon us. In the exact degree in which we are worthy of a great possession are we unable to rest in it; there is that in it and in us which discloses new possibilities of joy, and therefore of service. No man of conscience or imagination can be content with his work, however men may praise it, because as he works his vision of what he may achieve with heart and skill grows clearer; no man can be satisfied with his life, however rich and full, because, as a man's life deepens and widens, its needs grow vaster

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and nobler ; nor can any man be satisfied with the love he bestows or receives, however fortunate his lot, because the very act of loving increases the capacity for loving ; and as love grows deep and tender, it seeks, by the law of its nature, higher unity of spirit with spirit and the opportunity of more complete sacrifice and surrender. So the immortal within grows by all contacts with the mortal, and every relation, work, duty, and pleasure has that within it which will not let us rest either in attainment or possession.

Through this necessity, hidden in the heart of all true relations and wholesome experiences, to find realization in terms of the spirit a constant purification is effected. Love begins in passion, and ends in sacrifice and spiritual surrender ; work begins in ambition, and ends in service ; the traveller sets out to make a way for himself and serve his own ends, and becomes a humble seeker after the ways of duty and the will of God. The history of humanity is touched and turned

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to light through all its tortuous and sorrowful course by this silent transformation of the mortal desire into the immortal achievement. The youth hears the voice of fame and presses toward it with eager feet; the man struggles with his own sluggish will, his inert fingers, his uncertain visions, until the applause of his fellows is only faintly heard and he cares supremely to do his work with the skill of perfect insight and perfect craftsmanship harmonized in indissoluble union. It is a great price which he pays for the education which makes him an artist; for all education costs in exact proportion to the dignity and significance of the work which it fits a man to do. And all education is, in a true sense, painful. It is the travail of the spirit through which a finer life is being born; and since, for those who live truly and deeply, life is always growing in depth and power and reality and vision, the pangs of birth are never absent; for true living is being born daily into newness of life.

## Chapter XXXIII

### The Sorrow of Knowledge

**T**HOSE who do not feel the weight of the problem of life as it presents itself to the modern mind, and who have no sympathy with those who confess that they cannot solve it, have not faced the facts. They must be very light-minded or very light-hearted ; and, in either case, their attitude does not add to the evidence of a divine order working through the disorder of human affairs. Very little value attaches to the opinion of the man who has never resolutely closed with a difficult problem in an honest endeavour to know what is at its heart. To command the attention of serious students the man who attempts to discuss any phase of social and industrial life must know it at first hand ; the easy-going temper



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which evades the deeper difficulties and offers its readily discovered remedies, excites a kind of repulsion among those who want to know the worst in order to do the best. To be of service to one's time, one must live in it on intimate terms; must know its sources of doubt and feel the currents of questioning and despair which flow through it. To rise easily above all its perplexities would be to escape its deepest experience, to miss its special education, and to lose the power of helping it. If the greatest spirit of the sixteenth century were to return to us, he could not help us until he had put our cup of bitterness to his lips and drained it. An angel could not aid men unless he were willing to be a man. The Hebrews, turning their passionate longing for righteousness into Messianic prophecy, and their passionate consciousness of sin into equally passionate hope of the coming of a saviour, thought that their problems would be solved when God appeared among them. When He came, they

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failed to recognize Him; because, in order to help men, God had to become a man; in order to save men from their sins, He had to feel the full force of their temptations. To the most sincere minds the secret of the power of Christ's victorious faith is found in his complete knowledge of the black facts of life. These facts it was his special mission to know; the outcast were his companions; the poor were his friends; the sick and sorrowful were the objects of his constant care. He passed by the respectable world, and sought the impure, the unrighteous, the vile, and the lost. There was no depth of human iniquity or suffering into which he did not look with unflinching eyes; there was no injustice or brutal neglect of which he was ignorant; there was no agony of experience through which, in fact or in fellowship, he did not pass.

It is this thoroughness of knowledge which lays the basis for Christ's unique authority in dealing with the problem of

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life. Theologians have had much to say about the knowledge of evil, but they give the impression of dealing with ideas rather than with breaking hearts and shattered lives. Men must have a philosophy of living, but it must be rooted deep in the facts of human experience. Christ did not offer a series of generalizations; he passed through a typical and searching experience, unique in its sympathy with misery, its passionate care for men and women in their vilest conditions, its solitariness of spirit, its isolation, and its physical suffering; and out of the depths of this tremendous, first-hand wrestling with the most awful forces and facts he affirmed the reality of the soul, the beauty of life, the certainty of immortality. Buddha, according to one of the most beautiful traditions which the race has inherited, put aside the pleasures of life in order that he might understand and share its sorrows; but the tide of those sorrows was so overwhelming that he found no solution save in renunciation

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of a kind which was a virtual confession of defeat. "Cease to suffer," he said, "by destroying those longings, desires, instincts, and aspirations in the denial of which suffering has its roots." "Do not strive to escape suffering," said Christ, "because through suffering your natures find their highest development, and your desires their truest fulfilment." He did not evade the chances of sorrow; he rather increased them. Instead of urging men to love less, and therefore reduce the chances of rejection or loss, he urged them to love more. He set the divine example of committing the whole soul to the issue of life; of investing one's entire spiritual fortune in the fortunes of the race. His solution was not to withdraw from the struggle, but to plunge into the very heart of it; not to take ourselves out of the path of sorrow, but to face it with a higher courage.

Christ makes an appeal to modern men, therefore, which has the weight of a supreme knowledge of the things which

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perplex and harass them, and of a solution which is reached, not aside from, but through, these uncertainties and perplexities. The reality of these dark and almost crushing facts in human life was felt most keenly by the divinest soul which has ever appeared in the form of man; and it is safe to say, therefore, that the depth of a man's insight into the questions which torture men, and the solidity of his conclusions regarding these questions, must depend largely upon the keenness with which he feels the force of the blackest facts with which he attempts to deal.

“In Memoriam” has had an influence upon sensitive minds of the highest kind because its music is so full of minor chords. The breadth of that noble sweep of the harp of life was possible only to a singer who had passed through the shadow of death and found sunlight beyond it. A lesser poet would have found an easier melody at hand; but he who was to sing of immortality so as to make men's hearts burn must first walk with death. The

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stream of hope rises very slowly in the poet's soul; it runs through many shallows and breaks against many obstacles; it is often darkened by the shadows of clouds; it broadens at times into wide, sluggish pools, and seems to have lost all movement; when at last it flows seaward with a deep, harmonious sweep, it has touched all dark and dangerous places, passed all débris and wreckage of storm and time, and found freedom and joy out of all the darkness and vicissitude of its long and tortuous course. Browning's note is more jubilant; it has the resonance of the bugle in its ringing tones; but before the vision of the Christ breaks on the young David he has become tense with the anguish of spiritual struggle; he has faced the awful gloom of Saul with a courage drawn from all sweet sources of life — the silence of woods, the shining of waters, the songs of birds, the stir of the reapers. Before his song flashes into light it has traversed the breadth of man's life. The sublime elation of "Prospice"

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gets its most human note from the bold defiance of the foe standing in the last pass ; there is no evasion, no golden mist obscuring the awful visage, no easy silence, but the clear fact, the ring of steel on steel, the supreme peril. The heaven which lies beyond such an achievement is not incredible.

It is always idle to condemn the spirit of an age in unqualified terms. There are good and evil things in every age ; and those who find in any past age a complete correspondence between ideals of righteousness and human institutions reveal a lack of historical perspective. The spirit of the age is never to be lightly antagonized, however vigorously some of its manifestations are to be antagonized. It is very difficult, in the first place, to ascertain, at any given place or time, the precise nature of the spirit of an age. That spirit has as many aspects as the spirit of man ; and the spirit of man is never easily defined. The wise attitude towards the spirit of the age is never one

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of antagonism ; it is always one of patient endeavour to discover and to learn. Out of the depths of its experience some truth rises into the consciousness of each age ; and the recognition of that truth is, perhaps, the greatest achievement of the age and its most lasting contribution to the life of man. This age has not, in all probability, borne heavier burdens or passed through deeper experiences than other ages. Those who have the right to speak on this subject are very few in comparison with those who assume the function of speaking ; for while many make the most comprehensive statements, there are only a few whose knowledge of social and spiritual conditions is inclusive enough to furnish the materials for an intelligent opinion. There is reason to believe, however, that more men and women are comfortably housed, fed, and clothed to-day than at any earlier period in the history of the world. But into this better world there has come for the first time adequate knowledge of the con-



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ditions of the race everywhere ; and with this fuller knowledge has come a new consciousness of the sorrows of life. Rapidity and completeness of communication have made the world one great community, and with this world-community has come a world-consciousness of sin, sorrow, and burden-bearing. Men have never been blind to the tragic facts of life ; but they never before have known them so widely, so intimately ; and out of this knowledge there has come, as was inevitable, a great depression. Something like despair has overtaken many of the most sensitive men and women ; and they cry out passionately, not against their own fates, but against the fate of the race. There are times when the knowledge seems too great and terrible to be borne ; when, out of the depths of life, mists and darkness rise and cover the face of the sky. Men cry out, not in the insolence of skepticism, but in agony of spirit, because of the sorrows which they can neither understand nor lighten.

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To rail against the doubt which has its rise in this knowledge is to betray fatal incapacity to enter into that experience through which the race is being educated. The man who cries out against God because the sorrows of his fellows are breaking his heart is very much nearer God than he upon whom no shadow of those sorrows falls. It must surely be easier to forgive impatience with God's ways of dealing with those who suffer than indifference to their sufferings. He who carries the sorrows of the race in his heart has entered into one great phase of Christ's experience: he is seeing with clear eyes all that is in life. If our age has any supreme claim upon our reverence, it is to be found in its sorrow in the sorrows of its children. This is the Christ-spirit. There has been cross-bearing in every age, but never before have so many men and women shared Christ's consciousness of the misery of the world and walked with Christ along the way of the cross. The trouble with

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the pessimist is not his clear perception of evil conditions, but his lack of deeper insight and higher courage in dealing with them. Without this deeper insight and higher courage clear and honest perception of facts stops short both of comprehension and of helpfulness. The spirit of the age has the great quality of honesty; it needs the greater quality of spiritual insight; for without insight knowledge brings a crushing weight of sorrow upon the spirit. It is much, however, to face the facts; it is the first step in the spiritual reaction against their tyranny.

## Chapter XXXIV

### Some Sources of Pessimism

SO far as the depression which has affected so many people in recent years and entered so deeply into art has its origin in a clearer knowledge of the conditions of life the world over, and a more adequate perception of the difficulties involved in the problems which confront society, it is neither to be condemned nor regretted. The first shock of apprehension which comes with a sudden sense of the presence of a great peril often sets the will and steels the nerves. Without that shock the highest kind of courage is impossible, for the highest courage is not instinctive, but rational; it measures the full force of the danger, and summons all the resources of character to meet it. The feeling of some-

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thing like despair which often overtakes the most sincere lovers of their kind when they first take hold of social and industrial problems, and become aware of their extraordinary complexity and difficulty, is rational and wholesome; it is part of the education which the true helper of his kind must receive before he is fitted to do his work.

There is, however, a vast amount of depression which has other sources, and which is the result of disease. Those who read modern books and know modern art have passed through a wave of intense depression during the last two decades. It has seemed at times, to the reader of current literature, as if all the old sanctions had lost their authority, the old inspirations spent their force, and the old hopes dissolved in a mist of sadness. A dense fog has hung over many of the makers of art so long that one begins to ask if there ever were clear skies and shining stars. In this atmosphere it seems as if all men were vile, all women

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corrupters, all life a disease. The spirit is everywhere the creature of inflexible laws or of brutal chance ; the child grows into inevitable vice as he grows into strength ; the tenderest heart is doomed to be broken by the transmitted curse of corrupted blood ; those who struggle in the meshes of fate bruise themselves without gain ; all aspiration and self-sacrifice and toil are met with the derisive irony of an order of existence which remorselessly consumes all nobleness and studiously stimulates all baseness. And when one escapes out of this dense fog of pessimism, he often finds himself in a world which, if less brutally lustful and sordid, is full of weariness and disease and melancholy. A great many modern artists have put forth their full strength in dealing with their materials only to make the futility of all art and achievement more clear. This interpretation of life as brutal chaos, moral accident, or rigid necessity has been made so often, with so much force, in forms of such beauty, that many

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men have come to accept it as a matter of course. They have lived so long in the atmosphere of the hospital that they have come to accept the hospital as the normal home of humanity, instead of being a temporary refuge for a very small number of unfortunate or disabled people. Men and women of receptive temper succumb to this atmosphere of depression without even making the effort to get out-of-doors and to breathe the air of the great open world. They have grown into such familiarity with mental and moral insanity, they have lived so habitually with the diseased and the deformed, that they have come to regard sickness as health and insanity as a normal condition.

Now, art carries with it a certain authority ; beautiful and sincere work never fails to affect the imagination ; but art, being the product of men, reflects temperament, intellect, and character, and is quite as likely to misunderstand and misrepresent life as are the men who fashion

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it. A brilliant talker charms us by the freshness and variety of his tones, his impressions, his conclusions; but if we perceive that his knowledge of life is partial and his view of life distorted, we still get a certain pleasure from him, but we refuse to accept his views or to act upon his statements. There is a great deal of art the beauty of which we recognize and feel, but which ought not to influence us, because we perceive its inadequacy as an interpretation. We read Dean Swift's "Houyhnhnms" with keen appreciation of its merciless satire, but we do not accept its conclusions that all men are beasts. We know that the picture is untrue, and we remember that Swift died mad. We enjoy keenly the exquisite workmanship of Guy de Maupassant, but we come very soon to recognize that he is neither a wide nor a wholesome observer; we are aware from our first acquaintance with him that there is a lurking element of disease which is presently to wreck his superb intellect. We do not



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fail to recognize the power of Huysman's "À Rebours" and D'Annunzio's "Triumph of Death," but if we keep our sanity we are aware that in these artistic works we are in a world as unreal as that into which Poe takes us in "The Fall of the House of Usher." The tremendous personal force which expressed itself in the "Bête Humaine" may be recognized without accepting the interpretation of life which it presents. Zola has been, in fact, one of the greatest romancers of the time; a reporter of great power, but eminently untrustworthy save in a very limited field.

Society passes through periods of depression precisely as individuals pass through such periods, and the cause is usually to be found in some kind of exhaustion. When a generation spends its vitality prodigally in emotion, work, or pleasure, it draws upon the strength of the succeeding generation, and a reaction of lassitude or indifference follows. After two centuries of intense inward experience

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and outward activity like the sixteenth and seventeenth, it was inevitable that the eighteenth century should find England in a prosaic mood and a somewhat cynical temper. The fathers had burned out the vitality of the children. The same result follows physical excesses. The extent of invalidism in England in the generation which succeeded the pleasure-living men and women of the period of the Restoration has often been noted. The fathers had eaten grapes which were sweet to their taste, but bitter in the mouths of their children. Those who live in such a period of depression do not suspect that anything is wrong with their observation of the world in which they find themselves; they are unconscious of their own lack of clear vision; they do not recognize the fact that the sensitive and delicate organs of observation with which men are endowed are very seriously affected by general moral conditions. There are whole generations whose experience is interesting and val-

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uable, but whose views of life are practically worthless ; they looked through glasses so blurred and out of focus that everything was distorted and out of line. Dr. Johnson has somewhere said that a sick man is a rascal, or that every man is a rascal when he is sick. It is certain that health is the basis of all trustworthy observation of life, and of all sound conclusions regarding it. To find one's generation overclouded does not mean, therefore, that the sky has fallen ; to live among men who declare that life is a long, meaningless irony does not involve rejection of the testimony of the great sane spirits who have affirmed the noble possibilities of man's nature and the spiritual nobility of his life. Robert Browning is a saner witness than De Maupassant, and Tennyson a deeper observer than Verlaine.

That a great deal of current depression is mere fashion is evident to all who have taken the trouble to observe the relation between opinion and habit of life. The

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easy, conventional talk about the general misery from a man who is making the most of the pleasures of life means nothing; it is merely a mode of speech. No sensitive, sincere spirit could enjoy a life which was all bitterness to its fellows; if a man would impress us with the futility and tragedy of things, let him show some sense of the awful significance of such a philosophy to the race. So long as he eats, drinks, and is merry, he may be credited with opinions, but not with convictions. There are fashions in thought and speech, as in dress, and it has been the fashion of late years to take low views of life. Such gregarious conclusions are not worth serious consideration. It ought to be remembered, also, that the cause of a great deal of current pessimism is to be found in evil living. The man who is violating the laws of life cannot be expected to think well of them. Nor can the man of disordered nerves, diseased body, and morbid imagination be expected to see with clear eyes or to judge with

## Some Sources of Pessimism

right judgment. All testimony from men of this class may be finally rejected ; they who are blind cannot lead. To these untrustworthy observers must be added two other classes whose temperaments are often very interesting, but whose views of life are of no value save as revelations of temperament : the egotists and the sentimentalists. The egotist often arrests our attention because he is morbid and willing to talk about himself ; and disease of a psychological kind is always interesting. Jean Jacques may fill us with loathing at times, but we are so curious to know the inner life that we are eager to look into the heart of the man who offers it for our inspection. The egotist is never quite sane, and his view of life is always untrustworthy. As for the sentimentalist, he has no views ; he has only emotions.

## Chapter XXXV

### Health and Courage

**I**N an age which doubts the reality of the spiritual life, and so takes from men the supreme hopes, he who is eager to live by the truth and not by current opinion will simplify his problem by analyzing the pessimism in which he finds himself. So far as depression has its source in a clear vision of facts, it will give him serious thought; so far as it is the product of physical, mental, or spiritual exhaustion, of mere fashion, of disease, of evil living, of egotism, or of sentimentalism, he may dismiss it as of no consequence. It may have psychological interest of a rare kind; it may be full of disclosures of temperamental quality and morbid experience; but it is not a factor in the problem of a man's relation to the

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order in which he finds himself. It may teach him much regarding the consequences of violating the laws of life; it can teach him little regarding the meaning and value of life. It is well to remember that men sometimes lose their way for a whole generation, and that art often forsakes the line of sound and noble development for long periods of time. It is never wise to ignore the tendencies in the society about us, but it is often wise to resist them. They may seem irresistible at the moment, and the sensitive are perplexed and the impressionable swept away by them; but they may be mere eddies on the surface of the stream. The main current may be moving in a very different direction; and it is the main current which is significant. A man must live in his age and enter deeply into its life, but he must also be above it. "The Artist," says Schiller, "it is true, is the son of his time; but pity him if he be its pupil, or even its favourite! Let some beneficent deity snatch him, when a suck-

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ling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time; that he may ripen to a full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but dreadful, like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it."

If the philosophy of pessimism were true, and life were one long irony —

A Moment's Halt — a momentary taste  
Of Being from the Well amid the Waste —  
And Lo! the phantom Caravan has reach'd  
The Nothing it set out from —

the attitude and spirit of pessimism would be essentially ignoble. The brave man may see clearly that his situation is hopeless, but he neither laments nor curses; he sells his life for the highest price he can exact. If Fate is to destroy him, Fate shall not succeed easily; it shall pay the full price of a brave soul. A great deal of modern literature has been



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essentially ignoble, because it has defiled life or cheapened it with useless outcries, or vulgarized it by cowardice. It has degraded humanity by selecting the base, the unwholesome, and the foul as representative and typical. It was the weakness of the older romanticist that he chose only the significant, the striking, and the dramatic, and, by excluding the commonplace, gave his picture a colour above the truth. It has been the vice of some Naturalists that, while calling themselves stern truth-lovers and dispassionate photographers, they have simply reversed this method, and given the world the results of a selection quite as arbitrary and misleading. By excluding virtue, aspiration, and the play of the noble qualities, they have made men little better than beasts, and the earth a breeding-place of foulness. There is something ferocious in the treachery to their kind which some writers have revealed in their passionate endeavour to turn marble into clay, and to rob men of

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the saving quality of self-respect. The appearance of one pure woman or of one brave man gives the lie to these slanders of humanity, and brings out their essential baseness. If our fortunes were at their lowest, we should still be human, and the instincts of humanity ought to keep us from defaming our race. If we were doomed to die, we ought to die like gentlemen and not like ruffians.

If conditions were as hopeless as the pessimists sometimes paint them, we should still have our honour; and that could not be taken from us. If it were true that the battle is lost, we should have the great consolation of dying with faces toward the foe and with scorn of fear. The pessimism in which a great deal of modern art is steeped is the cursing of those who cannot look fate in the face. The air of the last two decades has been filled with the cries of the panic-stricken, the defeated, the disheartened. "The old sources of hope are lost," they tell us; "the old leaders are shown to

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have been mistaken ; the old faiths were lies ; the old enthusiasms are dead : we are defeated and the cause is lost." Well, if there are those who believe all this, let them go to the rear in silence, and give their places to men who have courage even if they have lost hope. Cowardice is contagious, like other forms of disease, and this generation has shown at times the influence of panic-fear. It has been assailed from all quarters by the cries of the sick, the morbid, the insane, to such a degree that its nerves have been shaken. Many of those who are fleeing, and cursing or lamenting as they flee, have never been on the firing line ; they have caught the contagion of fear, and are striving to escape from they know not what.

If the ~~sick~~, the morbid, the ~~insane~~, the egotists, and the cowards would go quietly to the rear, humanity would discover anew the strength and the sweetness of life. The foe would still be in the field ; there would still be vicissitudes and chances of

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disaster ; but there would be the majesty of a great cause, the consciousness of a noble opportunity, the sense of a supreme and compelling duty. When the brave are in command, it is easy to die, if death is the only alternative. Men do not need a better order of life ; they need health, and the courage which comes from health. Emerson prayed for health and a day ; many men have the day, but lack the health. Here and there over the field a man of health makes his fight, and straightway men take heart, gather about him, charge with him, and die heroically by his side. Such men point the way and reveal the real conditions of life ; they are the truth-tellers. If Christ possessed no other authority than that derived from his blameless and heroic life, his testimony might be set against that of all the morbid, the diseased, the blind, and the evil-minded who have borne witness to the futility of virtue and effort. In knowledge of life it is spiritual rectitude and insight which count ; numbers have no

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significance. If we are to suffer, let us suffer as He did, in sublime silence; if we are to be scourged and rejected, let us keep our spiritual dignity amid the squalor of sin; if we are to die, let us die for and with our race. Such a bearing plucks the bitterness out of sorrow and makes death a revelation of immortality. And such a bearing translates life into a speech full of spiritual reality and promise.

## Chapter XXXVI

### The Ideal in the Actual

THE "pattern in the mount" was the Hebrew phrase for the sublime conception of life which the Greek found in Plato's philosophy; the conception which makes all mortal things symbols of immortal ideas, and the whole material creation the sign and disclosure of a spiritual order. This is the open secret of all the great prophetic and creative spirits; this is the spring whence has flowed that stream of poetry which has so often refreshed the soul of the race; this is the source of that hope and courage which have made the teachers in every generation willing to endure hardship and bear the sorrows of misunderstanding and rejection if to a few they might give assurance of the reality of the

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Unseen and the power of the Invisible. The type may be as crude and clumsy as were the first wooden pieces of Faust and Gutenberg, but if the thought be deep and great the imperfection of the medium through which it finds its way to the mind is of small account ; the conditions in which we pass this mortal life may be hard and uncongenial, but if they convey spiritual truths to us, and make us aware of spiritual realities, it were cowardly to complain and ignorant to rebel. The wise traveller, to whom the great scenery or the great art of the world is accessible, does not waste his time on the discomforts of travel nor allow his thoughts to dwell on the shortcomings of his inn. The measure of a man's soul is his ability to disregard the hindrances and concentrate his energy on the achievement ; to put aside the accidents of a relation, a work, an opportunity, and grasp the reality. If there is, as a wise poet has told us, a soul of goodness in things evil, there is much more certainly a soul of

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beauty within the form of all relations and duties and works ; and he who is able to carry all his relationships, duties, and work to the mount where the patterns are, to the light of the spiritual order where these mortal things instantly put on immortality, has read the open secret and pierced the mystery of life.

This is idealism pure and simple ; and this statement of the habit of all men of insight, imagination, and devotion shows how completely idealism is woven into the very fabric of daily living. It is often spoken of as if it were visionary and unreal ; a beautiful mirage which the imagination creates for its comfort along the hard horizon lines of experience ; an illusion to which the poetic temperament becomes a willing victim. It is, as a matter of fact, "human nature's daily food ;" that aspect of the order of life which makes it intelligible and endurable ; that great and inspiring fact which makes it possible for us to live and move and have our being. If this irradiation of



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the facts of existence by spiritual ideas were suddenly withdrawn, the race would sink in despair; for while we work with, and too often for, the material, we live in the spiritual. If this soul of life took its flight, the body of life — its works, ways, tendencies, relations — would turn to foul corruption. When idealism vanishes from the home, and parents cherish their children for their wages, and children care for their parents for the sake of protection, there is no longer a family; there is simply a collection of greedy, heartless human beings feeding upon each other. When the man cares for the woman because she makes him comfortable, and the woman lives with the man because he supplies her needs, marriage becomes degrading. When the citizen sees in his country only an organized opportunity to make and keep money, patriotism becomes “the last refuge of a scoundrel;” when the Church is used for social or commercial advantage, hypocrisy puts on its vilest disguise; when man

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courts his fellow for the profit he can make out of the acquaintance, the sweetest relationship becomes mere bartering. It is the soul in a man which keeps his body from corruption; when the soul passes, the garment it wore must be put out of sight. It is the soul in relationship and work which keeps them from corruption; when the soul goes out of them, they instantly turn to vileness and decay. It is the soul of the man recognizing and dealing with the soul of relations, works, and things which keeps life clean and pure; and this is idealism.

Our spiritual progress is to be measured by the clearness with which we discern the ideal in our relationships and work, and the completeness with which we address ourselves to them. Growth in any kind of work is conditioned on fidelity to an advancing ideal; or, to be more exact, upon increasing clearness of discernment of an ideal. This is the secret of that divine discontent which drives the thinker, the teacher, and the artist steadily

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on into fresh labours, new undertakings, and larger responsibilities. From the thoughts of such men mere idleness of life completely vanishes; to make achievement a ground of ease, as men make the amassing of a fortune an occasion of retiring from activity, does not occur to them. Achievement, to such spirits, means occasion for more exacting work and opportunity for more patient fitting of means and skill to finer ends. Those who interpret this inability to rest in work accomplished as an expression of mere restlessness of spirit, misread the very nature of man and misinterpret the significance of the world. If the earth and the things it offers were simply for the using of the body, and had no ministry for the spirit, these blind leaders of the blind would be wise leaders; for in a world which existed only in and for the senses, and perished with the perishing of the senses, it would be idle "to strive, to seek, to find, but not to yield." But Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Chaucer,

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saw the splendour of meaning that plays over the visible world ; knew that " a tree had another use than for apples, and corn another than for meal, and the ball of the earth than for tillage and roads : that these things bore a second and finer harvest to the mind, being emblems of its thoughts, and conveying in all their natural history a certain mute commentary on human life." The man dies within us when we are willing to accept ease instead of growth, and pleasure instead of truth. Because everything a man touches discloses the presence of an idea within its structure, therefore he only is wise who in touching things cannot rest until he reaches the ideas behind them. Thus the world becomes a great wonderland through which the wise are glad to travel, though often weary and footsore, for the sake of that knowledge which feeds the mind and that wisdom which nourishes and enriches the spirit. And this is the joy of work : that as one does it with fidelity its soul becomes

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clearer, and one must shape the body with ever-increasing skill and love to contain and reveal the soul. The artists know the sorrow and the joy of this immortal hunger to give the soul form without concealing it. This it is which makes life one long, eager pursuit, one long, passionate labour.

If this is true of work, it is still more true of relationships. The tie that binds two human beings together must unite their spirits if it is not to corrupt or weaken them; and our relations with one another are helpful and beautiful and enduring in the exact degree in which they contain and disclose the ideal. If we understood this great law of life, there would be fewer shattered homes and broken friendships. In the stress of daily life and under its strain we need constant and clear recognition of the spiritual qualities of the ties that hold us together in home and friendship. The beauty of the relationship between the man and the woman has been touched a

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thousand times in art, but it has never been revealed ; it is known only to those who share in its possession. When the relationship is a constant opportunity for courtesy, thoughtfulness, tenderness, and that unconscious expression of reverence which is an instinctive recognition of the divine in the human, it evokes the deepest beauty in character and creates a hunger for spiritual perfection which in turn gives the relationship increasing depth and more inclusive range and influence. Secret and sacred places lie in the way of such a recognition of a human relationship that its responsibilities are lightened by perfect comprehension, its contact with material work and duty irradiated by steady recognition of spiritual opportunity, and its daily experience touched with that tenderness which, like a warm sun, evokes the shyest and most delicate growths of love out of the places where they hide in the depths of the soul. And who that has a friend of the spirit does not know the joy of that

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mutual recognition of the ideal which binds men together for all service and truth and growth? There is a friendship which counts what it gives and what it gets ; and there is a friendship which, in the unlocking of perfect trust, surrenders itself in absolute candour, consciousness, and spiritual rectitude ; which has the courage of love, the endurance of love, and the patience of love. This is the fruit of the perfect union of the actual with that ideal which is the only reality.

## Chapter XXXVII

### The Loneliness of Life

**I**T is significant that greatness of all kinds involves loneliness; a certain sense of isolation and separation seems to cling to superiority of all sorts. The mass of the mountain lifts itself into clear sunlight, but also into silence and solitude. One never realizes how murmurous with sound the sheltered, fertile world is until he has climbed above the reach of these companionable voices into the zone of silence. The ocean is at times all tumult and breaking seas, but in quietude its vastness, and in storm its fury, fill one with a deep sense of loneliness —

The moaning of the homeless sea.

A great career conveys the same sense of separation, and a great man gains his



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majesty of outline because he seems to be separated from his kind. The great man knows his kind and lives with them as the lesser man does not and cannot; but the scope of his experience and the clearness of his insight take him out of the easy range of his fellows' interests and understanding. Even when the great man is surrounded by kindred spirits he seems to stand alone; as the peaks of the mountain range, although grouped by the eye into a sublime fellowship, are isolated from one another. The great work of art has something incommunicable about it; a quality which keeps one from too intimate approach and holds its secret intact against the most assiduous seekers. We never feel that we have quite mastered the Divine Comedy or Hamlet or York Minster or Tristram and Isolde: there is something in such works which eludes and baffles us. And in every deep experience there is the sense of loneliness. We stand at a distance from Socrates as he drinks the hemlock,

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from Sir Thomas More as he lays his head on the block, from Wolfe as he lies on the plains of Abraham; and those who have loved Christ most deeply have held back from intruding at Gethsemane.

A great superiority of any kind brings loneliness with it, and the distance it traverses away from common standards and skills is exactly registered by its deepening sense of detachment and solitude. This sense of loneliness is the price we pay for personality; for individual consciousness, power, and life; it is both the price and the promise of immortality. Self-consciousness is possible only through detachment and isolation; and the richer and fuller the content of consciousness, the more distinct the lines which demark and differentiate it. The sense of loneliness which attaches to greatness is significant of that detachment which must be secured before a high degree of development is compassed; its roots are in the richest possibilities of our nature; its pervading presence is indicative, not of pathos

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and limitation, but of the greatness of life. Loneliness comes, it is true, with loss, sorrow, and calamity; it is one of the heaviest burdens of grief. This kind of loneliness is easily explicable; it is the universal loneliness which is misunderstood and misinterpreted. Its pathos has found haunting sadness of imagery in the verse of Matthew Arnold:

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,  
    With echoing straits between us thrown,  
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,  
    We mortal millions live alone.  
The islands feel the enclasping flow,  
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights  
    And they are swept by balms of spring,  
And in their glens, on starry nights,  
    The nightingales divinely sing;  
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,  
Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh! then a longing like despair  
    Is to their farthest caverns sent.

In these lines one of the truest elegiac poets has touched the very heart of the

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mystery; for the sense of loneliness is never so penetrating as when joy presses vainly against the barriers of speech; when the imagination dilates to its utmost limits in the presence of beauty of sound or sight or speech which goes home to the inaccessible place in which we live; when, in a word, the immortal part of us beats in vain against the limitations of our mortal condition.

In all deep affection there is a passion for possession which is never satisfied, because there is something sacred and incommunicable in the personality of one we love; and there is a passion for speech which is always denied, because we cannot find language for the deepest that is in us. Our souls are greater than our vocabularies; we cannot put into words that which is too deep and inclusive for human speech. At the best we can only make signs to one another; if we could speak adequately, there would be no mystery and immortality in love. If we could perfectly possess one an-

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other, there would be no divinity in love; that which makes it possible for us to serve and sacrifice for one another, to exchange help, strength, and sweetness, makes it also impossible for us to merge into one another. The richer the power of loving, the clearer the distinction of individuality between the lover and the loved; to have the capacity of loving the race one must have a divine personality. It is through our differences even more than through our similarities that we aid and enrich one another. Matthew Arnold was not blind to the source of the separation of man from man; he closes his pathetic and beautiful representation of human loneliness with words which clearly declare the truth even while they miss its deepest significance:

A God, a God their severance ruled!  
And bade betwixt their shores to be  
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

The possession of personality, with its sublime inferences of God, freedom, re-

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sponsibility, development, and immortality, brings with it inevitably that sense of separation and isolation which is the source of loneliness; and this sense is deepened by the conditions under which personality is heightened and unfolded. As love is too great for speech, and leaves a pain in the heart, so the individual spirit is too great for its mortal conditions, and carries with it everywhere a sense of detachment. There are moments when everything seems smitten with unreality; the significant experience which sometimes overtook the prince in Tennyson's "Princess," and sometimes overtook the poet himself:

. . . questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings;  
Blank misgivings of a Creature  
Moving about in worlds not realized.

Heaven not only "lies about us in our infancy," but enfolds us through the whole journey of life. The two worlds

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in which we live are not separated from one another by a vast gulf; they are continually mingling and merging in a thousand mysterious ways. We pass from one to another as we pass from room to room; we are one moment in the physical and the next in the spiritual. We are constantly refashioning the environment of our souls; constantly readjusting the claims and relations of the seen and the unseen, the earthly and the heavenly. Hence the sense of unreality which often smites our visible surroundings; the sense of detachment from them which comes when we seem to possess them most securely. There are days when the world and our work in it seem so remote that we are hardly conscious of touching either; we seem to be moving about in a realm of shadows, ourselves the only realities.

And in this endeavour of the individual soul to live in two worlds at the same moment, through a process of continual readjustment, there must come also the

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sense of loneliness which arises from our inability to understand ourselves and others. We are continually baffled and oppressed by our self-ignorance; our inability to see clearly what is taking place in our own spirits and happening in our own lives. The sense of loneliness which comes to one in a foreign country is greatly intensified if one does not speak the language. There are few experiences more baffling than to be with people who are friendly and companionable and yet to be shut off from all communication with them. As a matter of fact, very few men speak the same language; so diverse are our inner natures, so divergent our instincts and inheritances, so far apart our temperaments, that words do not have the same meanings for us. The deepest things in our lives never rise into the region of articulate expression; and of the things that may be spoken, few ever get clear, distinct, and complete utterance. Moving in worlds not clearly realized; among



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those whose deeper experiences are inaccessible to us, as ours are inaccessible to them ; speaking different languages even while we seem to be using the same words ; emphasizing the differences between us by the very process of unfolding and perfecting our own natures — is it surprising that we are lonely even with those who love us most tenderly and loyally ? And yet, who would give up the possibilities of greatness or avoid the solitude of the mountain, the sublimity of the sea, the noble work of art, the sublime experience, because loneliness issues out of the heart of these ultimate creations or reaches of achievement ? In the loneliness which comes with greatness there is, moreover, the promise of perfect companionship.

## Chapter XXXVIII

### The Moral Order

ONE of the most painful riddles of life is presented by the moral confusion which pervades society; the apparent escape of evil-doers, the apparent failure of those who strive to do well. This is the aspect of the mystery of evil which most sorely perplexes men and presents the greatest obstacle to faith. "How can sin go unpunished under the government of a righteous God?" is a question which has been put in many languages by multitudes of men since the beginning of time. The more deeply men have loved goodness and the more passionately they have searched for God, the more keenly have they felt the dissonance between the idea of God as it lay reflected in their own souls and the dis-

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torted image of God reflected in the disorder of the world. This perplexity and pain which the lack of harmony between a divine ideal of righteousness and the condition of society has brought to the most sensitive spirits is itself one of the evidences of the divine birth of the soul. The instinctive feeling that a righteous society in a righteous world is inevitable if there be a righteous God, and that the apparent prosperity of evil in the world is at variance with the existence of such a God, evidences the presence of ideals in the soul which are not born amid human conditions. So long as evil remains, men ought to feel perplexed and unhappy, because between the thought of God and the presence of evil there is a deep gulf fixed.

But there is a radical distinction, often overlooked, between moral confusion and moral anarchy. The two are constantly confused, and yet they are very different in nature and in fact. Some men are in the habit of assuming that because there

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is disorder in society there is no execution of moral law, and consequently no evidence of the presence of God in the affairs of life; sensitive spirits are often driven to something like despair by the apparent impunity of those who do evil. There is a pessimism abroad which teaches the doctrine of moral indifference. "Avoid evil," it says, "because evil is vulgar, ill-bred, and unbecoming; but do not look for its punishment in others. The easy road to success is through some form of respectable fraud. They who do good and good only will have the approval of their consciences, but they need expect nothing else. To become rich one must be grasping; to gain popularity one must flatter and lie; to secure recognition one must study how to please rather than how to give one's power the most genuine and noble expression." This philosophy, so readily accepted by those who look at the surface and do not penetrate the depths, would be true if there were no God. It

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is a very superficial form of atheism ; and it evaporates like a mist the moment one sees the problem clearly and sees it in its entirety. The riddle of the existence of evil will never be solved in this stage of life, although there are many side-lights which suggest that its darkness is impenetrable only from our present point of view ; but the riddle of the impunity of the violator of the moral law is a riddle in appearance only, and ceases to perplex the moment the confusions of traditional thinking on the subject are cleared away.

That freedom of action must be conceded if there are to be moral results achieved in life, and that men must have liberty of choice between evil and good if character is to be developed, are obvious ; a moral world involves the possibility of choosing the evil in preference to the good ; for without freedom there is neither moral responsibility nor moral growth, and freedom cannot be provided for man without permitting the existence of evil. The breaking of the moral law is

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not inconsistent with the rule of a righteous and omnipotent God. If, however, sin goes unpunished, the moral structure of life breaks down; one sin overlooked and forgotten would dethrone God. For God's rule of righteousness must be without break or limitation; it must be as absolute as his own nature. It is the perception of this fact that makes the apparent impunity of the evil-doer so perplexing and at times so appalling. The perplexity exists, however, chiefly in our inadequate idea of punishment. The world is full of moral confusion, but there is no moral anarchy. So long as law is inflexibly executed there may be many law-breakers and much lawlessness, but there is no anarchy. Anarchy exists only where the law fails of execution. Now, as a matter of fact, no sin has gone unpunished since time began; no act of greed, brutality, dishonesty, impurity, has ever failed to work its instantaneous effect on the wrong-doer. Like our pagan ancestors, we are always expecting

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to see the infliction of some external penalty; for to most of us punishment is something which happens *to* a man. We are still waiting, after all these centuries, as our fathers waited, to see the anger of the gods take some visible shape; we listen for the sound of the Furies' wings in swift pursuit, and when no crushing penalty falls like a thunderbolt from heaven, we charge another failure of justice against the moral structure of the world. Society appears to be full of men who have escaped the penalties of wrong-doing and are enjoying its fruits.

But God's conception of punishment differs fundamentally from our conception. Punishment, in his view, is not something which happens *to* a man; it is far more searching and terrible, for it is something which happens *in* a man. No external system of justice is necessary in order to bring a man to justice; the moral system of life works automatically and inexorably. What a man does in-

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stantly reacts upon his nature, and he becomes the product of his deeds. If a man could escape by the loss of an eye or an arm, it would be an easy escape; but there is no escape from the action of the moral nature; the doer and the deed are bound together forever: there is no pause for a dramatic arraignment and conviction, no postponement of penalty until another life; the evil deed works its effect the instant it is committed. Dante, surveying the world under "the aspect of eternity," saw that sin and its punishment are bound together in time as well as in space. In this present life men are already in hell or purgatory or heaven. The appalling fact about life is not its moral indifference, but its moral inexorableness. Behind every act, no matter how insignificant, God seems to be standing, and everything we do becomes part of us. We are better or worse every hour; we are never morally stationary, because, whether we think, speak, or act, we are fashioning ourselves and making



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our destiny. We cannot escape the searching processes of life; there is no moral neutrality possible. The universe, as David long ago declared, is not vast enough to afford a hiding-place from God.

We could bear the spectacle of men maimed and physically disfigured by their sins; what we cannot bear is the moral disintegration which silently destroys them. There is nothing more tragic than the lingering death of a human spirit while the body still lives and thrives; the loss of honour, honesty, purity, sweetness; the relentless decay of all that is sound and beautiful in man's nature and life. If one who has access to a library commits an offence against it, he is deprived of its privileges; that is the human way of inflicting punishment. The divine way is very different; the offender is not disturbed, the doors remain open to him, he comes and goes as before, but he becomes blind! The treasures of the library slowly fade from

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him ; his vision grows more and more indistinct, until it fails and he sees no more. This is the appalling fate which befalls the evil-doer. God does not need to watch him nor keep record of his life ; he is, in his own nature, the most delicate, sensitive, and infallible of registers. Whether he knows it or not, he is every day gaining or losing in clearness of vision ; he is becoming finer, truer, larger, or he is becoming coarser, falser, smaller.

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## Chapter XXXIX

### Religion Out-of-Doors

**A** SCOTCH Highlander, old, worn, and poor, was in the habit of going every morning a little distance from his cottage and standing there, unbonneted, for a few minutes. When asked one day by a friend, who came upon him and waited until he had covered his head and turned his eyes away from the hills, if he were saying his prayers, he replied, with a rare smile: "I have come here every morning for years and taken off my bonnet to the beauty of the world." It was an untaught man's expression of that deep poetry which runs through the Celtic race like a vein of gold; and it was also a primitive act of worship. The splendour of God on the face of the earth is always to be seen

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reverently and adoringly ; and only they attain the true spirit of worship to whom the silent aisles of the woods are as sacred as the pillared aisles of the church, and the autumnal glory shining on the hills as much a symbol of the presence of God as the altar fragrant with the breath of flowers and beautiful with the light of painted windows or of shining tapers. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, though we are slow to learn and swift to forget.

It is easier to define God than to realize his presence ; to confine him to places than to believe in his omnipresence ; to limit him to times than to know that all times are in his hand ; to draw a circle round his love than to discern that its circumference lies outside the universe. A large part of the history of human thinking is a record of painful and conscientious endeavour to compress God into the categories of human thought, and to make his character comprehensible by making his motives like our own, only

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larger. The theologians have divided the heritage of infinite love among men according to their own preconceptions or the limitations of their own minds, and have forgotten the absolute equality of the sons of God; the ecclesiastics of all shades and schools have claimed exclusive authority to speak for the Infinite, although all languages and symbols are impotent to express His nature; and good people of every generation and faith have identified God with certain agencies of obvious prosperity and excluded him from all others, and have limited him, with sincere but mistaken zeal, to certain times and places. And so religion has come to be ritual instead of character; worship, the adoration of the Unseen at some special place instead of a constant and universal reverence; piety has taken on professional forms, and has a language of its own, instead of being the perfect flowering of a man's nature and the natural, simple, universal speech of the soul; and God has been

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shut out of a large part of his world, instead of pervading and transforming it.

Tennyson, who was a man of religious as well as of poetic genius, once said that people had come to think of God as a kind of gigantic clergyman; so far have men wandered from the thought which Christ revealed. It is the greatest sin of ecclesiasticism that it turns into a profession that which ought to be the deepest and simplest life of every man born into this world.

To those who long passionately for a vision of God as great and divine as that which is reflected in the Gospels, Nature is a constant refuge from the small interpretations, the narrow limitations, the divisive ideas too often heard in the churches. One goes out-of-doors after many sermons, and draws a deep breath, and feels that he has gone from the presence of a finite into that of an infinite God. There comes in such a moment a great sense of joy that the littleness of human thought and the narrowness of

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human sympathies are, after all, powerless to limit God ; one listens and is almost overcome for the moment by vigour of presentation or array of authorities, but he goes out under the pure heavens, and the fog which seemed to be settling over the race disappears like a morning mist. Nature supplies the compensation for the purely ecclesiastical view, and corrects the vicious tendency to conceive of God professionally. Those who look at the movement of thought with some spiritual insight, and therefore with some divination of the future, are assured that for this reason science will presently appear to have been the greatest ally and friend of religion in this century. When the tendencies of contemporary thought lie clearly marked in the full knowledge of the future, it will be seen that science has secured modifications of the ecclesiastical ideas of God's will, God's law, and God's relation to the world, and his way of working in it, which are one and all in the direction of

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a more deeply religious conception of the universe. Nature will finally strike a balance with ecclesiasticism, and the churches will stand, not as sentinels challenging the world about them, but, like many of the English cathedrals, crowning the heights with an architecture both material and spiritual, which not only harmonizes with the landscape, but forms its spiritual centre and interpreter.

The view of God which one gets out-of-doors is less open to the danger of moral perversion than that which one gets under some church roofs; for Nature is not only impartial, but she is also inexorable. The man who breaks her law always pays the penalty; there are no exceptions; she is absolutely and impartially just. No sentimentalism obscures her vision or deflects her purpose; no ritual act secures exemption from penalty. The seed which a man sows he reaps, and no other; the deed which a man does reacts upon him, and no other; the work which a man performs



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feeds him, and he is fed in no other way. To go out-of-doors from the teaching of some pulpits is, therefore, to get not only a rational but a moral view of life; it is not only to have one's view broadened, but it is also to have it clarified.

There is no conflict between the house which men set aside as a visible symbol of the glory of God and for their adoration of him, and that vast world which is the work of his hands, and which reveals his will in every law and his presence in every force; but there is an irrepressible conflict between the purely professional idea of God and of religion taught in some pulpits and the conception which is born of a knowledge of God's world. The Church is enfolded by Nature, not separated from it.

## Chapter XL

### The Word in the Book

**I**T is pitiful to read the story of man's heroic and pathetic attempt to impoverish his world and his life by expelling God from one province after another, until Nature was denuded of divinity, art lost to the soul which craves the image of its own beauty and the emblems of its own immortality, science shut out on the threshold from the home it would have lighted, warmed, and protected! For centuries there was, as the result of an inadequate conception of the universe and of the divine nature, a persistent endeavour to circumscribe the spirit of revelation within the limits of a single literature, to identify beauty and pleasure with evil tendencies and instincts, and to exclude the order and majesty of the

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visible world from the fellowship of the influences which minister to the soul. But it was quite impossible to exclude God from His world, and the great spiritual fact of the last two centuries has been the recovery of noble territories to the sovereignty of God and the uses of the soul. Once more the light plays over the whole surface of life instead of over a little section of its vast expanse; nature becomes a symbol and a revelation of the Infinite; art is the Word using the forms and speech of beauty; and human history is one unbroken disclosure of spiritual order and of the destiny of the human spirit under historic conditions.

When Petrarch brushed aside the webs of artificial interpretation which monkish teaching and mediæval speculation had spun over the texts of the great writers of antiquity, and read his Virgil as the living work of a living soul, he not only set the great tides of modern life in motion, but he made himself the representative of modern men by per-

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forming a symbolic act: in rediscovering the human in the literature of antiquity he rediscovered the divine. It is often assumed that men needed for their guidance and growth only the revelation of the divine; but the revelation of the divine would be incomprehensible without the revelation of the human, and we should be incapable of comprehending God if we had not a certain measure of knowledge of ourselves. The spiritual history of the race is to be found in this double revelation; this continuous, interwoven, inseparable disclosure of the nature of God and the nature of man. Along these two lines of discovery the mind of the race has made its real progress and registered its real achievement; for the measure of man's real achievement in his earthly life is the measure of the knowledge of God which he has attained, and the reflection of that knowledge in his life. The Bible is, in a unique degree, the revelation of the nature of God; but it is also the revelation of the

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nature of man, and no one can understand it who does not understand how completely it has its roots in the soil of human history, and how deeply it is penetrated and permeated by influences that rise out of human character and conditions. The significance of this complete commingling of the divine and the human we have not yet fully mastered; it is one of the deepest and one of the most luminous of the mysteries which make us aware of the spiritual greatness of life.

The great books into which men have poured the energy of their souls, and in which they have consciously or unconsciously uncovered the secrets of their hearts, are not, therefore, in the deepest analysis, products of individual genius and fruits of individual art; they are the sacred records of the revelation of the soul of the race. He who opens them opens that sublime Bible of humanity which is one long and luminous interpretation of that other Bible which was also the work

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of prophets, poets, and teachers. The plays of Shakespeare form one of the richest and most vital commentaries on the Old Testament and the New; and the student who has not discovered the wonderful play of light from one to the other has not gotten to the heart of either of the two aspects of the one complete disclosure of truth. For no truth is ever understood when it is detached from the divine order in which it belongs. The Bible, studied apart from history, nature, art, and science, has been grossly misunderstood; and the attempt to comprehend Nature and Art apart from the play upon them of the light of the spirit has been equally misleading and disastrous.

The first step toward a real understanding of literature is not technical but spiritual preparation; it is not a mastery of forms, but an insight into the soul which inhabits and fashions the form. To study the Book of Job, the epics which bear the name of Homer, the "Divine

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Comedy," the plays of Shakespeare, and the great works of fiction, as if they were only splendid pieces of artistic skill, superb triumphs of expression, is to cut the roots of their greatness and rob them of their significance. They were conceived in the depths of the human soul, in the greatness of its human sorrow and toil, and they were born in the secret places of the souls of the great artists whose names they bear. This is their inner history and the explanation of their spiritual power and significance. And it is because of this deep, invisible unity of origin that one great voice answers to another from age to age and from literature to literature, reaching us through all differences of tongue and speaking a common language to the whole race. As there are differences of mood and message between Moses, Isaiah, and David, and St. Paul and St. John, and yet essential harmony of truth, so there are wide differences of temper, form, and accent between Homer, Shakespeare,

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Browning, and Emerson, and yet fundamental harmony of disclosure. They all speak to the human spirit of the things which make its life.

Out of the depths of that vast consciousness which has received and preserved all that has happened to the race, its deep experiences, its prime necessities, its irrepressible aspirations — the substance and soul of its being — have risen into clear view in the great works of art, as the seeds buried in the darkness of the earth climb into sunlight and witness to their hidden vitality in flower and fruit. And this deep inward life, struggling always toward harmony with itself and its world, and instinctively seeking that perfection which is at once its justification and the visible proof of its immortality, has sought and found the language of art; that final speech in which thought and insight and life attain ultimate clearness and beauty. And because man cannot speak of himself in any moment of insight without speaking



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of God, cannot disclose the structure of his own nature and the order of his own life without revealing the purpose and spirit of the Infinite, therefore the great art of the world — to the fashioning of which all passion and prayer and deed and skill have gone — is the revelation of God as well as of man.

There are certain words of St. Augustine which lead us to the very heart of this conception of the inevitable discovery of God to man in every real disclosure of man to himself: "Since, then, I too exist, why do I seek that Thou shouldest enter into me, who were not, wert not Thou in me? Why? because I am not gone down into hell, and yet Thou art there also. For if I go down into hell, Thou art there. I could not be there, O my God, could not be at all, wert Thou not in me; or, rather, unless I were in Thee, of whom are all things, by whom are all things, in whom are all things. Even so, Lord, even so. Whither do I call Thee, since I am in

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Thee? or whence canst Thou enter into me? for whither can I go beyond heaven and earth, that thence my God should come into me, who hath said, *I fill the heaven and the earth?* ”

## Chapter XLI

### The Record in Art

ONE of the most inspiring achievements of modern thought is the recovery of the growing world. To the first makers of poetry — the myth-makers — nature was alive to the very recesses of the created universe; the world was flooded with life; streams and valleys, deep woods and mountain summits, the dim foundations of the sea and the mysterious depths of caverns, were the homes of living creatures — beautiful for the most part, but, whether beautiful or otherwise, full of an overflowing vitality. In the childhood of the race men were limited by the ignorance of children and blest with their wisdom — the wisdom, not of observation, experience, and meditation, but of fresh feeling, of direct vision, and of

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the free and joyous movement of the imagination. They were at work in the world under hard conditions, but they still had that spirit of play without which there is no fresh contact with nature, no joy in toil, and no touch of the creative mood in the work of the hands. The myth-makers played with the world because it was full of an abounding life; stars, winds, tides, storms, the songs of birds, the murmur of branches, spoke different languages, but the free imagination understood all these strange tongues and employed them at will. It caught glimpses of

Proteus rising from the sea,  
Or heard old Triton blow his wreathèd horn;

it heard the revel of the Bacchanals; it came breathless and awe-struck upon "the great god Pan;" it caught sudden glimpses of naiads, dryads, nymphs, and satyrs; it heard the voice of Apollo. And this hidden, mysterious, half-spiritual movement of life was not the idle dream

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of the wise children of those early days ; it was the poetic personification of the streaming life of a growing world.

And then the dream faded, and the race grew old in thought. The sins of its youth were brought home to it ; and in the first hours of its repentance it turned away from nature, and nature turned to the ashes of dead matter ; the living world ceased to be in the thought of mediæval men and women ; or such life as lingered in it was baneful and malevolent. They saw a finished mechanism in place of a rushing, tumultuous, shining stream of life ; a creation which God had completed centuries before, set in motion, and left to the governance of arbitrary laws. So the beautiful old world which lay in the imagination of the myth-makers perished ; the incomplete, growing world, through which the creative energy freely manifested itself, ceased to be ; and the world of dead matter, completed and mechanically kept in motion, took its place. But the living spirit of man could not

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long believe in a dead world or a finished creation; the pulse of life in nature was so audible that every poetic soul heard it, and even in the darkest hour of the imprisonment of the soul in dungeons of its own making there were bird-notes which broke the silence and flashes of light which pierced the darkness, and the sensitive and open-minded heard and saw and understood. In the later and larger search of science the traces and signs of God at work began to multiply, until in the mind of the scientist, as earlier in the mind of the poet, there slowly dawned the sublime truth of the growing world: the world sown as a seed and silently expanding and blossoming through countless summers, and bearing the fruit of countless generations; the world of the living God — his vesture and garment — instinct with his life, overflowing with his creative power; the world which was not made but is being made; the unfinished world of perpetual miracle and wonder and revelation. This sublime world of

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living beauty and force is the witness and record of the continuous putting forth of the creative energy of God.

And the response of the spirit of man to this continuous putting forth of the creative energy of God is registered and preserved in great art. Whenever men cease to be artisans, with skilful but imitative fingers, and begin to express what is characteristic and original in their own personalities, they become artists; for no man can arrive at complete self-expression without transforming the materials with which he works into things of beauty and of power. The source of human creativeness is personality. That hidden, elusive, but imperishable vitality in the soul of man is a force which assimilates, discerns, comprehends, and creates; and whenever this force expresses itself adequately, the work of art is produced. For art is not artifice, contrivance, skill; it is the expression of the spiritual nature in a free, spontaneous, creative mood. It is beautiful; for beauty is the language in which

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truth speaks when it reaches its ultimate perfection of expression ; but the beauty which shines in it is born not only of the body but of the spirit, not only of the hand but of the soul. Whenever truth is so far mastered that it attains perfect clearness and harmony, it uses the language of art. Art is not, therefore, decoration, embellishment, adornment — a loveliness added to truth ; it is truth working its way through all material forms into final and perfect speech.

Art sometimes reveals poverty of spiritual ideas, and sometimes expresses the lower rather than the higher ideals ; not because beauty lends itself by choice to the sensuous or the corrupt, but because the creative energy which it reveals sometimes ebbs. The art of a period does more than reflect its spiritual quality ; it exactly measures and reveals it, and is noble or ignoble in theme and manner as the soul of the time stoops or rises. But whether touched with the fathomless beauty to which great spirits have access,



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or bound within the limits of that lesser beauty of form and colour within whose circle the lesser spirit confines itself, it is always and everywhere the register of the creative energy and activity of man. A great spirit like Michelangelo or Dante will use a great language; a smaller spirit like Bouguereau or Verlaine will use a lesser vocabulary; but in the lesser as in the greater work there is the evidence of an energy which has the touch of creativeness. The creative power in men ebbs and flows under the influence of laws and conditions not yet mastered; but whatever creative power there is in men at any period finds its way into some form of art; and art has, therefore, a significance which most men have yet to comprehend. It runs parallel with the divine creativeness in nature, and is the response of the soul to the revelation of the Artist who fashioned it, not only to obey His laws, but to co-operate with Him in the continuous putting forth of creative power.

A divine world must be incomplete; it

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must be in the process of making, unless God is ceasing to act. A great man does not produce a masterpiece and cease from working; there is an impulse within him which impels him to add one noble work to another, not because men applaud, but to ease his own spirit. Because man is made in the image of the divine Maker he must always add truth to truth in an unending series of beautiful works. So men rise into higher and more complete harmony with the Infinite. They cannot rest in knowledge of His laws and in obedience to them; they must share His thought and find adequate language for it. Humanity must co-operate with the divine creativeness and match God's work in nature with its own work in art. Whoever looks into the soul of the art of the world from this point of view will get at least a glimpse of the inner relation between nature and art, and understand why men have felt instinctively that art not only secures immortality for those who create it, but predicts immortality for the race.

## Chapter XLII

### Beauty and Immortality

**H**UMAN development is so irregular and so frequently interrupted by outbreaks of passion or inroads of barbarism that men have never yet, in large masses, at any one time, grown symmetrically and in harmonious completeness. No race has yet appeared which has been strong enough and clear-sighted enough to sustain itself on ascending lines of activity in all the great fields of life — religion, art, nature, and practical affairs. The Hebrew had the moral and spiritual sense, but lacked the artistic; the Romans had immense executive energy, but very little spiritual insight; the Greek genius was far more highly developed than Greek character. And it was largely due to this partial and

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incomplete development, this inability to round out human experience and hold the different sides of human life in true balance and sound relations, that the civilizations of these gifted and influential races came to an end. These civilizations in an organic form ceased to be, but each race contributed something to that totality of civilization which is indestructible. Modern races are, for this very reason, in the way of securing that full and balanced development which will not only give free play to spiritual energy in all fields, but satisfy the soul by making its environment reflect and express its own quality and nature. This harmony between the soul and the forms of life about it has never yet been secured, save for very short intervals and by very few persons; and yet this correspondence between a man's ideals and his condition is one of the things which he passionately craves, and without which he is a stranger in his own time and an alien among his own people.

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It is often necessary to make one virtue wait upon another, and to accept for the moment conditions which would be intolerable if they were permanent. In time of war the customary occupations are often suspended; in camp men live without those accessories which make up the richness of life; under the stress of danger they put aside most of the things they value for the sake of some one of the basal principles or possessions upon which civilization rests. It has happened more than once that the race, or parts of it, have had to fight for spiritual life; that is to say, for freedom, conscience, and the possibility of clean living. The rejection of beauty by the early Christians was largely due to the fact that the beauty they saw about them was part of the structure of a civilization which had become not only corrupt but corrupting. They put beauty away because, for the moment, they had to fight for righteousness. And when conditions arise which compel a momentary choice between

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right living and right expression, there can never be a doubt as to the right choice. Men must be sound and free before they can make the expression of their life wholesome, noble, and adequate. It is well to remember that the Christian revolt against art was not made in a great, free, creative epoch, but in a period of decadence, when the line had lost its firmness, the figure its nobility, the method its force and dignity; a period when art had become the servitor of a demoralized and declining race.

But these reactions against beauty, these epochs of rejecting its resources, mark the exigencies and crises of civilization, not its full, free, rich movement. Wars are interruptions of normal living; camps are tolerable only because they are temporary; and the end of all struggling, either by individuals or by society, is to give life greater freedom and fullness. The moment life is free to find full development, it seeks beauty as inevitably and by as deep an instinct as it seeks

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truth. Right living, right thinking, right speaking — these are all and equally essential to the life God meant men to live, if the structure and needs of their natures give any trustworthy indication of his purpose. We are still so far from any spiritual conception of beauty that we are slow to recognize its structural necessity ; we are so accustomed to regard it as decorative, ornamental, external, that we fail to perceive its rootage in the spiritual nature and its place in the spiritual life. Beauty in visible structure and form is righteousness in structure and form ; for beauty reduced to its simplest terms is the best way of doing a thing ; the best because the most adequate, complete, and final. A man is moral only when he does right in speech as well as in act ; when his words as well as his deeds express the highest quality of his nature and disclose his conscience. It is not irreverent to say that the ferns reveal the conscience of God as truly as the stars declare his glory. We

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are in the habit of speaking of Him as the Creator, but we forget that, in the very nature of things, a divine creator must be a divine artist. God could not do things badly without violating his own nature; it is well to remember this fact when we are tempted to reject something in Nature of which we do not see the beauty. Beauty is wrought into the very structure of the world, because beauty is the final form of expression — the natural and only form in which God can create things. An ugly world would be an immoral world. Therefore the ferns reveal the conscience of God the Artist, — the conscience which takes no account of the possibilities of recognition and recompense, but must always and everywhere give to the minutest detail of work the last touch of perfection.

Living in an incomplete world, in an unfinished civilization, and being ourselves only sketches and outlines of what we are to be, we lose, not the passionate craving for beauty, but the clear percep-



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tion of its moral necessity. The same law which imposes righteousness upon us imposes beauty as well; it is only in our blindness that we separate the two or imagine that there is antagonism between them. Beauty is the highest form of righteousness, and until righteousness is beautiful it has not reached its highest form. We are so accustomed to righteousness in its rudimentary forms in ourselves and others that we lose sight of this great truth. There are times when partial development seems inevitable, and carries with it an apparent postponement of the finer forms of spiritual unfolding. The Puritan was, at his best, a noble figure; but it is clear that the Puritan was the man of a crisis, not the master of a final and complete development of spiritual or social life. There can be integrity without beauty, if beauty must be postponed; but such an integrity is always partial and preliminary; it can never be final. "The beauty of holiness" is not an empty

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phrase; it means much which we have not mastered as yet. For every knotted and gnarled character, like Knox and Cromwell, bent on doing the will of God, men ought to be grateful; such men are the heroes of the tremendous struggles of the race for the right to live freely and completely; but its heroes of the freer and fuller life are men of a higher mould. Beauty is not always, under all conditions, within reach of the righteous; but, after the struggle, there must be other ways and days before them, and in the final stages of their being they, too, must find beauty. Immortality must bring beauty with it.

In so far as the saints have been unlovely, they have been undeveloped; in so far as the heroes have lacked harmony and sweetness, they have lacked maturity in righteousness and strength. There has been but one perfect life on earth, and the beauty of that life was the effluence of its righteousness, the radiance of its divinity. Christ had all the

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strength of the heroic fighters for truth, without a touch of their harshness and unloveliness; he had all the courage of the reformers, without a trace of their narrowness and lack of imagination; he had all the calmness of the truth-seeker, without a touch of his indifference to individuals. He was so harmonious that we find it almost impossible to comprehend him. He reverses all the conceptions of the saint, the hero, and the great man that have been held from time to time; he utterly failed to meet the expectations of those who were watching for the coming of a Messiah. So accustomed are we to imperfect development, with its confusion of violence with force, of ruthlessness with strength, of selfishness with genius, that we cannot easily reconcile the beauty of Christ's nature with its immeasurable resources. When the creative artist appeared among us, he was beautiful because he was divine. His words shared the beauty of the world, and in parable and teaching he

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associated these forms with the spiritual life. Birds and flowers and stars are as much at home in his speech as in the air, the fields, and the sky. In gesture, deed, and word ; in all the crises of his life and in the presence of all men ; in joy and sorrow, in death and in resurrection, beauty clothed him like a garment. As he was Truth, so was he beauty ; for truth, when it ascends to the highest stage and finds its final expression, is beauty.

In beautiful forms, therefore, the soul craves the image of its own beauty and the emblems of its own immortality. This craving is none the less real because it is often unintelligent ; it is instinctive in all men who have any spiritual vitality ; and there are many to whom ugly and inharmonious surroundings bring something very like physical pain. Sin in all its forms is hideous ; it never wears beauty save as a mask, and never can wear it long. In the exact degree in which we hate sin do we long for the

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beauty of holiness ; in the exact degree in which we long for perfection do we crave that beauty in form, manner, and life about us which shall correspond with the inner vision. And so long as we are denied that harmony we are driven back upon ourselves and become the prey of that dissatisfaction which always springs out of discord. When we come upon perfect beauty in any form, a sudden thrill warns us that we are facing one of those last perfect touches in which an idea, a vision, an experience, is born into and vitalizes a form. So in all the greatest art we seem to find ourselves ; and in finding ourselves we instinctively confer immortality upon the form which shares our life. An artist pours his life into his book, his statue, his building, his painting, with the conviction that he has laid up for himself that fame which is the human synonym for immortality ; and men guard and cherish the perfect work because, being perfect, they are persuaded that it must endure. So the

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marbles remain though the Greeks are gone; the Madonna survives though Raphael has departed; the Fifth Symphony speaks though Beethoven is silent; Westminster abides though its builders have perished. In its art the race sees the visible emblems of its immortality.

## Chapter XLIII

### The Incident of Death

**WE** live in a vast order which not only enfolds us but touches us every moment through a thousand forces and appearances; but so familiar is the aspect of things which surround us that only at rare moments do we become conscious of this larger movement in which all lesser movements are included. We have only to look at the sky to read the sublime evidence that we are citizens not only of this little world but of the immeasurable universe as well; we have only to watch the rise and fall of the tides to discover afresh the unity which binds star with star across the vast distances of space. The earth lives moment by moment because it is folded in the light and heat and movement of the universe. Every flower that blooms,

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however delicate and fragile, unfolds at the bidding of another world than that in which its roots are planted; every cloud that floats across the loveliness of the summer day is soft and luminous because the light of another world touches its innermost haze. We are affected hour by hour by these remote influences; we are confronted day by day by the splendour of the universe; and yet we are often unconscious of these larger relations!

And it is well that we should be; for our work for the day is here; and there are times when the doing of that work is the absorbing duty to which everything else must give place. When the harvest is ripe and the time of reaping short, a man does well to think only of the field, and to leave the landscape for more favourable days. There are days for the field, and days for the landscape; days when one must surrender himself entirely to the work in hand; and days when one must search the universe and bring his life into harmony with its laws.



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There are near duties and remote relations; for life is made up of the visible material and the invisible force; of words and deeds and emotions which concern passing circumstances and the temporary condition, and of other words, deeds, and emotions which are evoked by convictions regarding the unseen, the invisible, and the eternal. There is no deep life for any man unless he lays hold, in thought, imagination, and faith, of the unseen spiritual universe; there is no real life for any man unless he grasps with clear discernment and steady will the conditions which surround him. The problem which a man must solve is to bring the power of faith in the unseen order to which his spirit is allied to bear in dealing with the material world to which his body is akin. So familiar is this visible world of work and duty and human ties that, though a man believe in the invisible spiritual order, it is often difficult for him to rest in it and live by it; as difficult as it is for him to feel the

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reality of the universe when his hands and thought are absorbed in the field where the harvest waits for his reaping.

Sometimes these wider connections of his life are suddenly brought to his consciousness by an unusual event in the physical world. An observer has made record of the extraordinary impression made upon him while watching an eclipse from the summit of the Rigi. Looking down on that noble landscape at mid-day, he saw it darkened by the vast shadow of the moon passing over the sun's disc and moving across field and lake and mountain as if it were obliterating the earth. Here was a visible result of interplanetary action; a sudden and convincing demonstration of the kinship of star with star. Across the quiet landscape of the earth a shadow from the universe seemed to be silently flung.

In like manner, in great and unusual experiences, the vastness of man's life is sometimes impressively brought home, and on the instant eternal-relations blot

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out time-relations ; the prospective of time is exchanged for the perspective of eternity, and a man sees events in their real relations and order. This is especially true of that mysterious experience which we call death. As the days come and go in the customary course of work and duty and love, death seems like an awful discord. When it comes to those who stand near us, it seems like an inexplicable interruption of the order of life ; a swift and irrational interference with work and development ; an awful and, sometimes, a brutal severing of ties tender and sensitive and sacred. Looking at it from the standpoint of the years in which we live, death is inexplicable ; we cannot make ready for it, nor explain it, nor reconcile ourselves to it. It is only as we rise out of the visible into the invisible order that we can make room for it and give it place. We often accept it with submissive faith ; we rarely recognize it as a passing incident in an unbroken and endless life.

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There are moments, however, when the depth and greatness of the experience through which we are passing suddenly sets our little earth in the shining order of the immeasurable universe — and then death has no terrors; it becomes, indeed, so unimportant in comparison with the ends we are seeking that we do not give it so much as a thought. In that exaltation of emotion, that clarity of vision, it takes its place with all the other normal and inevitable happenings of life. The perspective of eternity is suddenly substituted for that of time, and a man becomes conscious of the power and unity of an endless life.

Schiller said that death must be a blessing because it is universal; we may put it out of mind and ignore its presence, but no man escapes it. And when we remember how many men resent it as an interference with their plans, or dread it as the opening of a door into a room from which no voice comes back, it is surprising that men meet this su-

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preme experience so calmly. For the vast majority of men and women meet death not indeed with welcoming glances, but with quiet courage. Dr. Johnson lived in terror of death, but when the final hour came he fell asleep like a tired child. In that last hour the vision broadens to take in the sweep of life and to recognize death, neither as the end nor even as the interruption of the natural order, but as a normal incident. This dilation of the imagination, this swift substitution of eternal for time relations, is almost invariably accomplished in moments of peril. Whenever a crisis comes which makes us aware that many things are worth more than life to us, we suddenly see persons, events, and possessions in true perspective. There is no hesitation or uncertainty in that moment of clear vision; we die for those we love with the deep joy which a spiritual opportunity always brings with it. On the field of battle, on the deck of the cruiser, men do not take death into

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account. In the supreme moment, when love of country, of honour, of heroism, absorbs the whole energy of a man's spirit, death is of no more account than an obstacle on the highway or the sting of a bee in the fields. It is an incident in a great experience, not the end of a career. There is a tonic quality in the indifference of men to death in great moments. For while civilization is to be measured by its care for human life, the greatness of a man, an age, or a race is to be measured by indifference to death. Society must hold every man's life sacred in order that he may give it freely; it is to be scrupulously protected because it is his supreme possession, and therefore the one supreme sacrifice which he can make.

## Chapter XLIV

### Prophecies of Easter

**F**ROM the very beginning Jesus of Nazareth seemed to be moving toward some far-off great event. There was a current in his life which steadily bore him onward to those tremendous experiences which have become the supreme events in the history of the race. There was in the very beauty of the song which announced his birth a prediction of the tragedy of his career. At that time no teacher, human or divine, could have stood for the gospel of peace and good will without evoking the hostility of an untaught world. To teach that sublime truth, so far in advance of the thoughts of men, was to set one's feet toward Calvary. In the serene possession of that truth Jesus moved from

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city to city, lingering sometimes beside the lake, resting sometimes on the mountain-side, seeking at intervals the silence and solitude of lonely and desolate places; touching men's diseased bodies and sick souls, and everywhere teaching a truth which condemned the Jewish Church and pierced Jewish conceptions of life like a knife. The preaching of the gospel on the lips of the teacher who was not only to declare but to incarnate it, inevitably carried with it the bearing of the cross and the wearing of the crown of thorns. Christ seemed to be always touching the future. The descent of the dove and the declaration of the voice from heaven at the baptism; the mysterious temptation; the transfiguration; the ministry of angels in Gethsemane — all these events and many others revealed the far-reaching spiritual associations and relations of his life, and prophesied the resurrection and the ascension.

It is easy to read into the earlier pas-



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sages of a great life a significance which later years make clear; but there was something in Christ's preparatory years and history which unmistakably pointed forward, even when we put the final events out of mind. In the opening chapter of a story we are often aware of the presence of the tragic element, and we know that great and terrible experiences are approaching. In the Greek tragedy the distant feet of fate are heard long before they are audible; in the greatest dramas the strife and storm are divined before the first film of cloud has dimmed the blue overhead; in certain temperaments we instantly detect the presence of inevitable sorrow; in certain traits of character we recognize the approach of distant successes; in certain moral developments we discern the coming of strength, peace, and power. Those who have some degree of spiritual discernment find the unforeseen in life, but nothing of that irresponsible, lawless, unmoral element which men call chance.

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They cannot predict events, but they do foresee the course which character is to pursue, the fruits which are to be gathered, the outcome of living. The happenings of the world the wise do not foresee, but they can foretell the fortunes of the soul. There is no mystery about this prophetic power; because the element of prophecy is part of the order of the world.

Nothing stops with itself; everything touches, affects, and modifies everything else. The world is full of invisible currents set in motion by innumerable impulses, words, and acts which have been forgotten. We change everything with which we come in contact, and everything changes us. Influences radiate from every personality, are caught up in other streams of influence, modified, reinforced, and sent in new directions, or poured through invisible channels, for centuries. Christ lived and died long ago in Judea, an obscure provincial hidden in the very splendour of Rome; but

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to-day every art betrays his influence, all legislation bears testimony to his authority, and society is stirred to its depths because men feel that there is a chasm between his teachings and its habits and institutions. We know where things start; we never know where they end. It is customary to mark by tablets or other memorials the places where great men are born, but it is impossible to mark the places where they cease to be. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon; there he died and there also he is buried; but the end of Shakespeare is not yet, and, so far as can be seen, there never will be an ending of that tremendous force which we call Shakespeare. The place where Lincoln's spirit appeared on earth may be found, but who knows the place where it will vanish from the earth? Socrates has more disciples to-day than he had when he taught in Athens; Plato has more lovers than when his friends heard his voice; Dante lives, almost six centuries after his death,

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more vividly, deeply, influentially, than in the melancholy years of his exile.

The sense of incompleteness clings to the tragic as closely as to the fortunate happenings of life. Nothing is ever complete in one's experience; in every joy there is something which cannot be seized, and every great sorrow has its prophetic afterthoughts. We are never able to rest in desolation as a finality; the seeds of a new order are sown in every overthrow of the old. The hurricane is no sooner past than nature begins to rebuild; the walls are hardly down before the ivy silently steals up the broken lines and covers the wreck with a beauty which is like a mantle of charity. No destruction is final; everything contains the potency of a further life; the mortal is everywhere penetrated with immortality. To Demosthenes the fall of Athens was a final catastrophe; in reality it was the beginning of that leadership which has no limits of time and which runs to the ends of the earth. Even in those

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appalling tragedies which leave the stage like a night without a star the imagination is unable to rest in what it sees ; it inevitably searches for the light which it feels is approaching below or beyond the horizon. The culminating catastrophe of " King Lear," the most colossal of all modern tragedies, somehow clears the air ; we feel that at last the storm has spent its force, that the singing of the birds will be heard again, and out of the wreck of the shattered world a new world will rise. More than this : we feel that the end is not yet, but that on some other stage Lear and Cordelia are to come to their own.

This prophetic quality in life has its source in the structure of things. In the career of Christ it issues out of his very nature. He is inexplicable if one attempts to explain him in terms of mortality and finiteness. He was in the world, but he was not of it. His contacts were with a larger environment ; he acted with reference to ends which were

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beyond the limits of time ; he taught a truth which would have been the most colossal of falsehoods if there had been no indestructible spiritual order ; he lived as seeing that which is invisible. The moment we come into his presence we are aware of forces, ends, aims, and a spirit which were not born in this world and do not belong to it. Prophecy issued also out of all the great events of Christ's life. The song of the angels, the voice at the baptism, the agony in the garden, the sublime anguish of Calvary, would have been inexplicable without the light which was reflected back upon them by the angels at the open tomb on the morning of the resurrection. Such a nature and such a life were not formed and fashioned within the narrow limits of time and space ; they brought infinity and immortality within the confines of the world. Alone among men, Christ has visibly put on immortality ; but that sublime truth does not rest on the resurrection ; it rests in the very

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structure of man's nature and life. Neither is comprehensible without it; neither is ever complete in itself; both affirm its reality and predict its fuller disclosure. The risen Christ does not stand solitary in a vast circle of unopened graves; he is the visible witness to the sublime truth that the grave has no victory and death no sting; for life and immortality are one and the same.







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