





THE
LOVE OF THE WORLD

A BOOK OF RELIGIOUS MEDITATION

BY
MARY EMILY CASE



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TO

C. R. S.

ONE WHO HAS TAUGHT ME, BY AN OLD AGE
BRIGHTER AND MORE FULL OF SIMPLE GLAD-
NESS AND OF POWER TO HELP THAN ANY YOUTH
CAN BE, WHAT CHRISTIAN FAITH AND HOPE AND
LOVE CAN MAKE OF HUMAN LIFE ON EARTH.

PREFACE

This book is neither theological nor argumentative. It is not a systematic treatment of any theme, but merely, as is indicated in the title, a jotting down of scattered thoughts, grouped under more or less appropriate headings. If to any the word "religious" seem misapplied, the writer can only appeal to her own strong conviction that there is nothing which is not, or may not be, religious, sin only excepted.

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THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER I.—THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

JESUS says: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." John says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the

Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." I think I understand Jesus better. Paul is not the only apostle who has written things hard to understand. Jesus's word is always easier. Not easier to do. No; hardest of all to do, though easiest to know. Though his yoke be easy, and his burden light, and his commandments not grievous, yet not with sloth or negligence or ease may a man walk his way.

O Master, let me walk with thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me thy secret, help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Only by toil, by patience, by watching, and by prayer may we attain that life. Yet the conception of it is simple: to serve God only, and, as for mammon, to make that serve him too; not to lay up treasure of earth's goods, but to give and to use them. And what is it to serve God? To follow Jesus's footsteps in serving man, to seek first his kingdom, the utmost good to all the

children of our common Father. "And all these things shall be added."

And if some things I do not ask
In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit filled the more
With grateful love to thee.

And these things that shall be added bring cares, which sometimes deceive, and choke the word, making it unfruitful. That is our fault, not the fault of the things. In love God gives the things, and if in love we take them at his hand, and in love use and enjoy them, then they do not choke the word or make it unfruitful. It is not that we prize any of God's gifts too highly or enjoy them too much, but that we love God and man too little—ah, far too little.

But what does John mean? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And he adds that "all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father." I love the world, and the things that are in it. I love the beautiful world of matter, earth and sky and sea, sun and moon and stars, forest and field and

garden, flower and fruit and living thing. I love the world of man, of human society; not man in the positivist, humanitarian sense, nor man as a soul to be saved in a so-called religious sense; but man in a distinctly worldly sense—his thoughts, his feelings, his books, his music, his conversation, his amusements, good clothes, and good dinners. And what is worse, I keep loving them more and more. My simple and direct enjoyment of all these things has at least doubled in the last ten years. Furthermore, I cannot conceive that the things that are in the world are not of the Father. How, O thou enigmatical apostle, can there be anything that is not of the Father? Is it not written, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof"? God made man, made his appetites, made the things to satisfy them. Surely, then, they are of the Father. There is but one thing which is not of the Father. That thing is sin. Doubtless it is to the sin that is in the world that Paul refers when he says, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Full of sin are those cynical max-

ims and those hard and selfish ways which prevail so widely among men. It does not follow that the things which the world counts pleasant and profitable ought not to be loved and sought, but only that sin is to be shunned, that we are to be on our guard against an unloving spirit. Not renunciation, but

A mind to blend with outward life
While keeping at Thy side.

Could John mean that it is the sin mixed in man's thoughts, feelings, conversation, amusements, which one may not love and love the Father too? But nobody really loves sin; we sin for gratification, and from lack of purpose to restrain impulse. Does he mean merely to say what Jesus says, that we must love God most of all, and place his kingdom first? I cannot tell what he means. Perhaps, then, if I fix my thought upon Jesus's word, which seems so plain and simple, and strive ever more earnestly to live by that, it will be accounted sufficient. If, then, I "find from day to day a nearness to my God," if faith is growing easier, hope brighter, and love warmer, I will not fear to

face the fact that day by day and year by year the things that are in the world are growing dearer to me—not dearer to hoard and cling to, but dearer to enjoy. As heart and mind deepen and broaden with the years under God's discipline, why should not our appreciation of all things grow? His gifts are ever new, and they seem ever richer, fuller, gladder, more satisfying to the varied needs of our many-sided nature. They do not turn to ashes for me, do not become to me vanity of vanities. Some things, perhaps, we may outgrow, but there are more which we need to grow up to. "Earthly vanities," "vain delusions," "passing shows," "hollow mockeries"? Think, O bold man, before thou darest thus to sit in the seat of the scornful. Think whether the fault be in the things which God made, in the desire for them, which desire also he made, or in thine own shallow thought and foolish heart, which understands neither God nor his gifts.

"Think less of the things of this earthly life, and more of God," say some. The order is inverted. Reverse it. Begin at the other end. Think more of God. Let that come

first. Then, when thy heart is first filled with his abiding presence, there will be more room, not less, for the things of this blessed earthly life. The thought of God drives out sin. It drives out nothing else, but rather enlarges the heart to reach all thoughts possible to man, to hold all joys more dear.

CHAPTER II.—“NOT CONFORMED TO
THIS WORLD”

“BE not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” There are multitudes of men and women who do not form their lives at all. They do not choose to obey the will of God or to be of use to man, but are dragged hither and thither by the impulse of self-gratification. These are the wicked. Some of them are criminals, and some are good citizens; some are dissolute, some are free from vices; some are outcast, some are respectable. In

one thing they are all alike: they are not guiding their lives by a steady purpose to give, to help, to serve, to do the painful right—and that one thing is the essence of wickedness.

These people I love in many ways. Not one of them who cannot draw me, even if at the same time he repel me. Some have the charm of intellect and wit, of polished manners and graceful ease. Others, who have none of these, win by the spell of a strange life, yet a life not wholly alien to me, a life I have not known but could know. The bond of human fellowship is strong. These wicked, what are they but my kin, what are they but my fellow-sinners? If I am striving after something better, and they are not, that is a reason the more for loving them. I love them well. I love the things which they love, believing them things truly worthy to be loved.

Yet I pray God I may not be altogether as one of these. Their way of living is not noble. A human life not guided by purpose is but as the life of the brute. Nay, worse; for noble, spiritual faculties are degraded,

enslaved to do the bidding of selfish passion—a frightful power which the brutes have not.

The cumulative influence of the life which numbers are living together is wonderful. When many are living without faith and hope and love, then doubt, despair, and hatred permeate the common thought and feeling, and a standard is formed which has a terrible conforming power. Who has not felt it—that cold, hard selfishness and cynicism, that polished insinuation of baseness, that stately pride, that easy forgetfulness of all who are outside?

“Be not conformed.” ’T is well that the injunction comes from that apostle who fought with beasts at Ephesus. We must fight, fight unceasingly, with all the strength of our soul, and with all the spiritual forces which prayer can bring to our aid. Let no man think the battle may be won by fleeing from the field. Live nobly among those who live ignobly, doing the same things which they do, but with a difference. Yet beware, and yet again beware. It is a fearful combat, and with fearful issues, this

struggle in which we are set and which we dare not flee. Consider what it is to think base thoughts, and ever baser day by day; to have the heart hardening, hardening, till not one generous feeling, one noble impulse, stirs; an ever narrower, feebler, shallower soul, no outlook, no outreaching, no fellowship with God or man. Oh, fight, my soul! "Be not conformed!"

CHAPTER III.—THE DANDELIONS

THERE is a spot by the way, as one walks toward the village, where, for a brief time in May, the thick, green grass is crowded with clusters of enormous dandelions. My joy in their gorgeous beauty grows with the years. I anticipate them for weeks, and when they come they are always larger and brighter and more a delight than I had pictured them. The other day, as I was expressing my pleasure in them, my friend said: "But how soon they are gone. Is it not sad to think how beauty passes?"

“Yes,” I said; “but they will come again.” Ah, they will come again! That beauty-loving, beauty-making power whom we call God, and whom Jesus taught us to call Father, will never fail. It is the sadness that is passing; the eternal verity is joy. For God is the eternal foundation, and he is the All-father, loving all his creatures.

And I smiled to think God's goodness flowed
around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness his rest.

There is a sadness in change and loss; yet who would not have dandelions in May and roses in June, and more dandelions again the next May, rather than dandelions all the year round? All the losses shall be made up; the sadness is a passing thought.

For life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own.

Life is not to the Christian as it seemed to the pagan, one brief, bright spot on a vast, black background, a bright spot which must be made as intense as possible while it lasted. What can be sadder than those exquisite odes of Horace in which he pictures the

sweet and gentle joys of spring against the blackness of a fast on-coming night, unless it be those mad, melodious little wine-songs called by Anacreon's name? "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Let us eat and drink, indeed, for to-morrow we live. Eat and drink, not with the feverish haste and greed of one who must gratify in a moment an infinite longing, but with the calm, sweet satisfaction of those who know that "in our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare." All kinds of joy, lower and higher, should grow and not wane, ever old and ever new. Why should not the bright things pass? They are not given us as possessions to keep and hoard. Only dead things can be hoarded. Life is better, yea, this fleeting life, ever moving, yet ever resting in the bosom of infinite, unchanging love and power.

He who bends to himself a joy
Does the wingèd life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

CHAPTER IV.—A SHALLOW OPTIMISM

AND what of sorrow? To say that joy is the great and lasting fact, sadness brief and passing, is that a shallow optimism? The conception of a never-failing, all-sufficient happiness as more comprehensive and enduring than sorrow in this universe of God is optimism indeed, extreme optimism. But shallow? Not necessarily. There is a shallow optimism. It has two ways of disposing of sorrow, to deny its existence or to deny its reality. Both these ways are false and shallow. Sorrow exists—black, monstrous, frightful. There are the sorrows of our common human lot—loss, pain, disease, death, anguish of body and of soul. There are the sorrows coming more directly from man's crime and vice—cruelty, oppression, grinding, brutalizing poverty. Nor may we take refuge in the second falsehood, that sorrow is not real, that pain is matter of indifference, moral acts and states alone having any real value. To those who are acquainted with grief, this needs no refutation. Sorrow

is no sham. It is true, and it is evil. It may be productive of good, but it is itself an immediate and actual evil. Let us not try to shut our eyes or to mock our deepest experience. There is a cloud, black, real, and, to our little selves in the little present, large, very large. But open the eyes wider, look out more broadly; the sunlight, after all, is a vaster thing than the shadow. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The Christian is happy; not, like the epicurean, by intensifying a brief ray in contrast with a vast gloom soon to engulf it, nor like the stoic, by denying the real existence of any blackness, but by trusting that light alone is infinite. Oh, let us never try to be happy by contrast or by forgetting!

It is not praise
To call to mind our happier lot,
To boast bright days
God-favored, with all else forgot.

Remember sorrow, but remember also God. Carry on thy heart the woes of the world, but rest thy heart upon the heart of God.

Deep and dark are the mysteries that

hang about the existence of sorrow, and especially about its connection with sin. Is it a necessary connection? Would there have been sorrow had there been no sin? God knows. May the sinless suffer? Yes, verily; for Immanuel knew deeper depths than human thought can fathom. The innocent suffer with and for the guilty, both voluntarily and involuntarily. When such suffering is voluntary, it may perhaps be called sacrificial.

The idea that sorrowful experience is disciplinary is an old and familiar one. How far this is true we may not know. Great is the folly and presumption of those who weigh woes and disasters in balances, and announce just what and how much good they were intended to accomplish.

Suffering may bring salutary results, but those go too far who say the same of sin. There is too much of this confusion of ideas, leading to shockingly immoral statements. The great poets, to whom we look for the clear vision of truth, have not always spoken the right word here. "Rephan" is ambiguous. If it means that a world where there

is nothing unpleasant, nothing imperfect in its natural qualities, no hardship, no endurance, no temptation, would not be the best place to form character, it may be true. But if it means that a world where there is no sin would not be the best place, then it is damnable falsehood. Evil is an ambiguous word. We hear men say that character is strengthened by experience of evil, and thus they account for the existence of such a world as this. If by evil they mean pain, toil, struggle, perhaps they are right. If they mean sin, they are wrong. Sin always weakens character, never strengthens it. Untried innocence is not character. Untried innocence is weak. But guilt is not the only alternative. There is such a thing as tried innocence. That is character, that is strong. Temptation and sin are not the same. We can imagine Adam and Eve mightily tempted, mightily resisting, and triumphant. Then we can imagine the whole human race descended from them inheriting their moral strength, instead of our present inheritance of moral weakness, ever tempted through all the ages, and ever stronger to

resist. This is not only a possible conception, but was possible as a fact. We may have a good word for sorrow, but never one for sin. Sin is ever and only a hateful, hideous, and abominable thing. It has no good side, no compensations. Is it not sin that has defiled God's pure image in us? Is it not sin that separates us from God? Is it not sin that ever lays that cruel burden on our Saviour's heart? Our Saviour! Then sin itself, though wholly and forever without compensation, is not without hope.

Two sorrie Thynges there be—

Ay, three:

A Neste from which ye Fledglings have been taken,

A Lamb forsaken,

A Petal from ye Wilde Rose rudely shaken.

Of gladde Thynges there be more—

Ay, four:

A Larke above ye olde Neste blithely singing,

A Wilde Rose clinging

In safety to ye Rock, a Shepherde bringing

A Lamb, found, in his arms— and

Chrystmesse Bells a-ringing.

CHAPTER V.—GAIN AND LOSS

THERE is a broad and far-reaching conclusion for which evidence seems to be accumulating, that in the general course of things the gains are greater than the losses. This seems to be true in the evolution of worlds; is it also true in the life of nations and of individuals? We are not at present in a position to prove it. Those of us who permit ourselves to believe some things which are not proved may believe it. At least the opposite is unproved.

Historians have been wont to say much about the decay and death of nations, attributing their fall to internal corruption. Are not these statements due to a false analogy, and a partial view of facts? Perhaps he sees more clearly who says, "The great empires of the Old World perished, not through internal moral-intellectual decay, but by outward pressure. They fell apart through insufficient political organization, and succumbed to the violence of stronger powers."

Rome, since the days of her own histo-

rians, has been a favorite instance of national degeneracy. If we compare the time of the second Punic war with the time of Nero, there are conspicuous losses indeed. A rude vigor, a simplicity of living, a singleness of mental vision and of moral purpose, a fervor of patriotism, a personal military daring, an earnest religious faith, marked the early Romans. Their descendants lost in vigor, and gained in gentleness; they lost in simplicity, and gained in refinement; they lost in singleness of view, and gained in breadth. If they were less zealous for Rome, they could be more just to men of other nations. If Roman citizens no longer fought, they did other things perhaps equally worthy of a man. And who would say that the loss of faith in the ancestral gods was not a step to nobler faith? The standard of morals was higher in the time of Seneca than in the time of Plautus. A Horace is a hundred times more a man than a Cato. Better an age that could produce a Tacitus than one which produced an Ennius. No, the Roman race did not degenerate; it rose from a lower to a higher plane of life.

And what of the individual? In the sweep of those forces which effect the development of nations many a soul is ruined. "So careless of the single life" is this "stream of tendency." As Rome rose from rude barbarism to refinement and culture, the virtues of a civilized man might replace the virtues of an ignorant barbarian. This is great gain. On the contrary, vice might replace virtue. This is utter loss. The same man who was vile in the Rome of Nero might have been upright in the Rome of the first consul. Wider opportunities do not come without greater temptation. Not to every one of us does the devil offer the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. A higher standard of morals in the nation does not mean a higher moral character in every individual. In truth, we here come upon another element, the free choice. There is no fixed law of progress for the personal soul. All that can be said is, that he may make his gains greater than his losses, if he so choose. There is no loss destined for a man in the course of nature which does not bring with it a greater gain, if he does not sell his birthright.

CHAPTER VI.—YOUTH AND AGE

To be young is good, to be old is better. It is a perpetual astonishment to me to hear those who believe that God is good lament that they must pass from youth to age. If growing old is bad, then there is something which is bad in the inevitable course of nature. This is to accuse the Maker. Surely it is good to grow. The saddest of all sights in nature is stunted growth. He has small conception of the meaning of life who looks upon youth as the brightest and best part of it. Life is an increasing, not a waning, good.

There are inevitable losses in growing old. First, there is the fresh bloom of youthful beauty. Far be it from me to decry that as a thing of little worth. Nay; it is a lovely thing, a good gift of God. Many another gift we could spare rather than this. But there is a beauty of the aged that is far better. The beauty of the young is a comparatively empty thing. It is so plainly a gift and not an attainment. Ah, that face

in which we read of victories won, of sorrows well endured, joy unquenched by aught that life has brought, wisdom, and quietness, tender love, and hope that will not fail! What round and rosy cheek, what flashing eye, has beauty to compare with that?

The old have lost physical strength and energy, the gladness of abounding physical life. This is a loss hard to bear. Bodily strength is a great good. Strength of soul is better. Who would go back from what he now thinks to what he used to think? Who would barter a chastened spirit for a strong arm and leaping blood?

The young are enthusiastic, hopeful, confident, courageous, believing. The old are not necessarily unenthusiastic, despairing, diffident, cowardly, and skeptical. There is in the enthusiasm of the young an element of rashness and folly, in their hopefulness an element of ignorance, in their confidence an element of conceit, in their courage an element of recklessness, in their belief an element of credulity. It is quite possible in growing old to keep all these good qualities, purging out all these bad elements.

I love the young, but the old are better. It is good to talk with a boy or girl of twenty; it is better to talk with a man or woman of forty; better still with a man or woman of eighty. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we shall be something more and better than we are.

Listen, thou child I used to be!
 I know what thou didst fret to know—
 Knowledge thou couldst not lure to thee,
 Whatever bribe thou wouldst bestow.
 That knowledge but a way-mark plants
 Along the road of ignorance.

Listen, thou child I used to be!
 I am enlarged where thou wert bound,
 Though vaunting still that thou wast free,
 And lord of thine own pleasure crowned.
 True freedom heeds a hidden stress
 Whereby desire to range grows less.

Listen, thou child I used to be!
 I am what thy dream-wandering sense
 Did shape, and thy fresh will decree—
 Yet all with subtle difference.
 Where heaven's arc did seem to end
 Still on and on fair fields extend.

Yet listen, child I used to be!
 Nothing of thine I dare despise,
 Nor passion, deed, nor fantasy;
 For, lo! the soul's far years shall rise
 And with unripeness charge this hour
 Would boast o'er thine its riper power.

CHAPTER VII.—IN THE ORCHARD

THERE is an old apple-orchard on the shore of the lake. Last Sunday it was at its moment of perfect beauty. As I reclined upon my favorite bough of the largest spreading tree, my book in my hand, closed as usual (for there are better things in an orchard than reading), while the breeze wafted the faint sweetness of the clustering blossoms, the birds sang, and my eyes rested on the deep green grass and the blue water, I was thinking of none of these things. I was thinking of the worms' nests. How happy the living creatures seemed as they wriggled in the sun. Like the Ancient Mariner, "I blessed them unawares." And tomorrow a man would come and burn them. I must be glad of that, for they would spoil the trees, my dear old trees. Oh, yes; let the worms be burned. Yet I was sorry too, for joy is joy, albeit the meager joy of a worm, and fire must hurt even a worm. Said a merry, three-years child, my heart's joy and in truth my valued friend, who gives

me more good counsel than I can give to him — said he to me one day: “Did God make the little worms? Does he love them too? Then grandpa is a naughty man to burn them.” Who will answer the child? Here we stumble upon a far deeper and darker problem than that of human suffering, for there may be to man the resulting good of moral discipline. But what compensation to the worm? I exonerated grandpa, saying that he must burn the worms because they spoiled the trees. “Oh, then they are naughty worms to spoil the trees,” was the child’s reply. I said no more. Why tell him that the worms too are guiltless? Uncompensated suffering inflicted upon the innocent — alas! my child, it does look very like naughtiness somewhere. If not in grandpa, and not in the worms, then — pause, my soul. Utter no blasphemy.

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

“Faintly trust?” Nay; I will trust not faintly, I will trust fully, freely, strongly. It

must be all trust here, no sight, not even the smallest ray of light. To trust is hard. But if one can trust at all, why is it not as easy to trust perfectly as to trust faintly? If I cannot think that God is perfect in justice, love, and power, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, then I will not trust him at all; no, not one inch. But if I do think he is thus perfect, then I will trust him forever and for all.

CHAPTER VIII.—BY THE WATERFALL

THERE is a lonely spot shut in by cliffs of stone veiled in delicate green, and in the midst a little waterfall, spray and mist gleaming white in the sunshine against the dark rock. The place is so beautiful and so little frequented that one must think of it as beauty which God makes for himself. Yet I think he is always glad when one of us will come out to look at it with him. To me, standing in this spot and gazing down upon the cascade and up upon the cliffs, it seems that God is both in his works—that

the power which carries the water down and the tree-trunk up is God—and that he looks upon his works and takes joy in beauty. This is a sad combination of pantheism and anthropomorphism. At this moment I will not think of any of those terrible Greek words. God takes gladness or sorrow from all, gladness from all but sin, sorrow from us when we sin, and joy over one sinner that repenteth. In the parables of the prodigal son and the lost sheep it may be that the lost are sought for their own good; but in the parable of the swept-for shilling, for whose? Surely not the shilling's. He who looks at natural beauty as looking at it with God has a noble fellowship. He need never fear loving it too much. Perhaps we dishonor the Maker by loving it too little. We walk too carelessly in his sanctuary, though all his messengers, the poets and prophets, from the beginning have warned us to beware.

And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.

CHAPTER IX.—JOY

MY grandfather, a devout and upright man, was greatly desirous of my growth in piety. He conceived joy as of two kinds—religious joy, found in prayer, reading religious books, and the services of the church, and worldly joy. While knowing that it was but natural that certain childish sports should then attract me, he hoped they would soon be quite banished from my heart. I can but think that he conceived the human heart as an inclosed space, and that when religious joy grew, as every true believer must long to have it grow, it drove out, in the very nature of things, all other joys, and filled the heart.

Such a division of joy is quite impossible to me. All joy, save that which is found in sinning, is to my thought religious joy. Body and soul reach out, so God has willed it, for that which fills their need. “God giveth them their meat in due season,” and with it giveth joy, full, many-sided, deep, and rich. Is it not all his joy? Why then call it less

than religious, as if it were outside of him? Why wish to lessen it? There is no need to lessen any joy to make room for any other. The human heart is not an inclosed space. It grows with that which fills it. Shall we make ourselves less than God has made us?

And shall we think to imprison the Deity within bounds? We say that when we are uttering words of prayer we are in communion with him. But when and where are we out of communion with him? When we are speaking words to him, is that joy more in him than other joys? O our Father, we are with thee when we know it not! All our springs are in thee. Make us clean, make us strong, that all our life may speak to thee and answer back thy love.

CHAPTER X.—SOCIETY

THERE was a time in youth when the trifling and short-lived vanities of the social world had little charm for me. Such things were far beneath the level of my thoughts.

It seemed much grander to stay at home and read Plato. So intellectual and serious a young person could not enjoy the conversation of ordinary folk, nor the gaieties which please the throng.

O that lofty, vanished youth, which had not learned the folly of despising! O ignorant and superficial judgment, which counts my neighbor more frivolous than I because he wears a better garment, dines out oftener, and talks about the last new novel or the comic stage. O vain conceit, which stands aloof from converse with the poor, the ignorant, and unlettered, as of another world than they. Who is there that cannot give me something better than what I find in myself? No longer do people weary me. I find social visits and the talk of all kinds of men, women, and children both pleasant and profitable. Verily, my pedestal is shattered. A pillar sixty feet high does not now lift me above those common things in which the vulgar are interested. It does not seem a waste of time to hear Mr. A's opinion of the state of the market, Mrs. B's anxieties about Bobbie's

cough, young C's experience in foot-ball, and pretty Miss D's view of the comparative merits of Tennyson and Browning, while I might be reading metaphysics, or thinking on the things of the Spirit.

Here is certainly a great change which the years have brought. Is it a change for the better or for the worse? For the better, Seneca and Epictetus, St. Simeon and Thomas à Kempis, John Knox and Richard Baxter, to the contrary notwithstanding. I will not say that the world and its lying vanities have been making ever-deeper inroads upon my religious life, and more and more enslaving my affections, dragging me down to a lower level of thought and desire. Not so; but rather, as religion has deepened its hold and broadened its sway, every part of life quickened by its touch has become more real, more sacred, more joyful, more satisfying. Religion is not a department of human life. Religion is a spirit pervading all departments of human life. The religious nature is to be cultivated and the soul prepared for heaven, not by withdrawing the affections and interest from "the

things of time and sense," taking ever less and less joy in them, and fixing the thoughts exclusively upon subjects called religious. No, no; not so are saints made. There must be an ever-deepening, ever-broadening love of God and man in the soul, and then will nothing which God made, nothing which ministers to man, seem trivial to us.

Wouldst thou be daily more religious, O my soul? Draw nearer to the Father, and that will surely not draw thee farther away from the human things, even the simple, lowly things that please the sense. The taste of that which pleases the palate, the bright adornments which attract the eye, the harmless gaieties of social life—do not call them irreligious things, foes to thy religious life, or, alas! to thee they may become so. Carry them in thy heart so very near to thy religion that they shall ever feel its purifying touch. Wear the ball-dress, eat of the dainties, and beware lest thou think one unworthy thought, say one unkind word, do one cowardly or ungenerous deed, or ever forget, in selfish pleasure-seeking, the world's need of thy love and help.

CHAPTER XI.—BOOKS

The world of books is still the world

TRUE, O poet, and that fact adds another to the things to be abjured, if indeed to abjure the world is the thing that becometh saints. The pillar on which I stood when Plato seemed more attractive than society must be made higher and placed on a still narrower base. For Plato is only more intellectual than dancing, not more unworldly. Intellectual pride is a part, and no small part, of the pride of life. Nay, there is even said to be a kind of pride called spiritual pride, to which those are tempted who have quite abjured the things of the body and the things of the intellect. It would seem that to withdraw from the world and to shut the soul up to itself does not deliver from temptation.

If renunciation be a test of saintliness, how far have I renounced the world of books? Make the test severe. Would I be willing to take some religious book, say Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," for my

sole reading, giving up all worldly books whatsoever? No, never. To be honest, I do not like Thomas à Kempis. Change the test, then. Say the Bible. Would I be willing to limit my reading to the Bible only? Ah, that is different, very different. I could do very well with the Bible only. The Bible is a body of literature. It cannot be called a religious book at all, in the sense in which the "Imitation of Christ" is so called. There is a great deal of the world in the Bible, and even something of the flesh and the devil too. Certainly if the choice lay between the Bible alone without any other book, and all other books without the Bible, I would eagerly and gladly choose the Bible. But who dare bid read Genesis and no other history, Isaiah and no other poetry, Paul and no other philosophy? He will not find his warrant in the Bible itself. The stoic may despise books and the learning of the schools; the Christian, never. The Bible is divine and human. So is all life upon the earth, and all the record of man's life and thought. The world of books is still the world, a wide, rich world. In it are

beauty and power and light, and in it, too, are snares and pitfalls. He only walks in any world with safety who takes firm hold of truth and walks with God.

A book is a spiritual presence. Its spirit is noble or base, loving or hating, sincere or mocking, clean or unclean. Shun the evil, O my soul; touch not the unclean thing. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

CHAPTER XII.—HIGH AND LOW

WE have little to do with the absolute. One is tempted to think at times that it might prove a simpler subject to deal with than the relative. What is high and what is low? Are spiritual things high and material things low? The ascetics have always thought so.

From the low train of mortal toys
I soar to reach immortal joys.

I doubt whether they are to be reached by soaring.

Matter existing alone, apart from any living soul, if such a thing is or could be, is low and even worthless. But matter as we know it, in its relations and adaptations, is too closely united with the highest to be called low. We do not and we cannot rise above it. Perhaps the path to our highest spiritual development lies right here where we are, in dealing with material things justly and faithfully. The apostle bids us mind not high things. A man of the greatest intellectual gifts and attainments may be doing his duty in scrubbing a floor. If he is doing his duty, he is doing the highest thing in all the universe. Let no one mourn as over wasted powers, or say that high gifts are brought down to low uses. Let no one say he stoops to such toil. If he himself feels that he stoops to do it, he is not a man of high character. It is an exalted privilege that we are permitted to do anything that is of use. All work stands above us and beckons us up. Happy is he who sees every duty as above him and worthy of his best.

A false estimate of what is high and what is low is a common source of bad manners

as well as of bad morals. There are some persons of culture and social standing who treat their equals with graceful ease and courtesy; the few whom they regard as their superiors, with exaggerated deference; the many whom they count beneath them, with calm insolence and utter disregard. This behavior they count proper from the higher to the lower, forgetting that insolence is always low. Learning is better than ignorance, but the learned are not always higher than the ignorant. Since there is something in us above the intellect, the very learned may be very despicable. A refinement of taste which looks with scorn or indifference upon the vulgar is itself the essence of vulgarity. An evident sense of superiority is not a token of superiority. A quiet assumption is more offensive than an obtrusive claim. Respect is due from every man to every other man.

Since elevation is in the action itself,—that is, in the attitude of soul, not in that with which the action deals,—to live on a high level is open to every man. The honest, the humble, the reverent, the useful are high, and their work is high, be it with matter,

with mind, with spirit. The careless, the proud, the scornful, the useless are low.

An action may be high without being great. Greatness is not open to all; it implies something more than noble motive. Greatness is power guided by love. The love without the power is noble, but not great. The power without the love is monstrous, but not great.

There is a higher and a lower. That which is high is within the reach of us all. It is within our reach now and here, upon this very earth which Jesus trod. He was not higher when he spoke eternal mysteries than when he used the plane and saw. He is not higher on his throne than when on his cross.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE WORLD WITHOUT GOD

How deep is the gloom which weighs upon the spirit in reading the words of those who find no God in the world, nothing but man and a something which they call na-

ture! These prophets of no-god would seem, like the prophets of God, to have been since the world began. It seems but a step from that Roman poet who

Dropped his plummet down the broad,
Deep universe, and said, "No God."
Finding no bottom,

to this Mr. Richard Jefferies whose books I have been reading to-day. One can scarcely believe them two thousand years apart. There are the same close observation of nature, the same yearning for some kind of heart-union with nature, the same longing to save men from all their sorrows and mistakes by bringing the race into harmony with nature, the same gloomy intensity and brooding sadness. Well may they be sad. Neither will they win thus peace for their own souls nor redemption for men. Man is not a child of nature; he is a child of God. What is nature? The all-mother? Strange mother! Blind and deaf; pitiless, or powerless to aid; who torments her children for a few brief years with meaningless and useless sufferings, then blots them out as they had never been. What is nature? Matter, force,

and law. Which of these shall be just? Which of them shall show mercy? Which shall help or save? Nature is not our parent. She cannot even reveal to us a parent. Nature reveals power, and not with certainty anything else. Is it an intelligent power? Is it a beneficent power? We know not. Call it, then, the unknowable, and escape despair if you can. Our case is worse than that of the ancient pagan world, inasmuch as an unknowable is infinitely farther off than an unknown. Worse than the pagan world, unless, indeed, we be a Christian world. Knowing Christ, we know God, a father, a redeemer, a sufferer. No other but a suffering God for such a world as this. Nature and man, suffering and sin, a black, black world. But into that world light is come.

The awful unknown power that in the darkness
 lies
 Thou saidst could be revealed, through thee, to
 mortal eyes :

And what though earth and sea his glory do pro-
 claim,
 Tho' on the stars is writ that great and dreadful
 name —

Yea — hear me, Son of Man — with tears my eyes
are dim,
I cannot read the word which draws me close to
him.

I say it after thee, with faltering voice and weak,
“Father of Jesus Christ”—this is the God I seek.

On thee I lean my soul, bewildered, tempest-tost,
If thou canst fail, for me then everything is lost.

For triumph, for defeat, I lean my soul on thee;
Yes, where thou art, O Lord, there let thy ser-
vant be.

CHAPTER XIV.—ANTHROPOMORPHISM

AS THE eye and ear become accustomed to these big Greek words, they do not strike so much terror to the soul as they formerly did. My idea of God is anthropomorphic, it is true. The choice lies between anthropomorphism and agnosticism. If we may conceive that there is anything in God which is like to anything in us, if man is in any sense created in God's image, then we may know something of God. Otherwise, we can never know anything about him. We may postulate the existence of some-

thing back of matter, force, and law, as a philosophic necessity, or we may refuse to philosophize at all, and stop short with matter, force, and law as observed realities. In either case we do not know God. The only God who can be known by man is, to just that extent to which he may be known, an anthropomorphic God. My God is a being who knows, feels, wills. He is righteous, as any moral being is righteous, not by necessity of nature, but by voluntary conformity to that law of love which is the eternal law of moral obligation. Necessity of nature is not righteousness.

“My God?” Not mine because I have discovered or imagined such a being. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom the prophets and kings of Israel dimly saw, whom the Messiah of Israel and Redeemer of the world makes manifest, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. “Canst thou by searching find out God?” No; but he can find out me. There stands the record written. He has come to search for men. Our Father can and does make himself known to his children.

CHAPTER XV.—PANTHEISM

ANTHROPOMORPHISM might find pardon in some quarters, pantheism in others, but a combination of the two — monstrous! Guilty of that, how shall I save my philosophic soul? Yet let me have my thoughts, though they are fragments, and not fitted together in one perfect whole. Though incomplete, they may not be untrue. Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?

Pantheism is an indefinite term. If it be pantheism to believe that force is not an attribute of matter; that all force is spiritual in its origin; that God is directly acting upon matter everywhere, producing all those motions which we call heat, and light, and electricity, and life, and the rest, then I am a pantheist. Questions crowd upon the mind. What is matter shorn of its attributes? Is it anything? Was it created? Is it eternal and inseparable from the Divine Spirit which pervades it? Unanswerable questions. Yet am I sure that it is God who is pushing upward this little blade of grass, opening the

petals of this blue violet, waving the branches of the trees, and guiding through the air that bird which wings its way across the blue. How awful is his presence in the solemn stillness of the woods! How awful, yet how glad! "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me."

Oh, how I fear thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears!

The fixity of nature's laws, as we call them, is but his wise and loving way of working. "The Deity lacks not ministers; he himself ministers." We are not separated from him by a long train of second causes. We are not in the iron clutches of a merciless mechanism. O thou Almighty and All-merciful, how shall I walk before thee? "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

CHAPTER XVI.—THE RELATION OF RELIGION TO FACTS

EMOTIONS arise in view of facts or of supposed facts. It may not be necessary to es-

establish facts by evidence in order that they may arouse emotion, but it is necessary that they be believed to exist. If, then, the world ceases to believe in the facts which have hitherto lain at the basis of the religious feeling, the feeling will disappear. There are those who, while they expect to see men abandon all belief in God and a future life as insufficiently proved, expect at the same time to see a beautiful development of religious emotion leading to noble moral action. Such a condition is simply impossible. Religion is not an aroused state of emotion with reference to nothing in particular. Religion is an attitude toward the Deity. If no Deity exists, there can be no attitude toward him.

There is a God, or there is not. A man who does not believe that there is a God, and a knowable God, cannot be religious. His soul may swell with cosmic emotion, but cosmic emotion is not religion. It lacks the elements of reverence, love, and obedience.

This is no time for sentimental folly. Let us call things by their right names. If we

can reasonably continue to believe in the facts of religion, by all means let us do so. It is not necessarily unreasonable to believe them because they are not proved. Certainly they can not be disproved. If, however, we must give them up, let us look the matter squarely in the face; let us give up religion altogether, and make the best of it, if there be a best.

CHAPTER XVII.—THE BREADTH OF THE COMMANDMENT

“THY commandment is exceeding broad.”
“For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” There are no works of supererogation. There is no double standard. There is nowhere and at no time any easing of the requirement. There is no half allegiance. There is no partial obedience.

We are all prone, after the fashion of the Romish Church, to make a double standard, and to think that in so doing we are raising the standard, while in fact we are debasing it. We are prone to imagine that there is a worldly life, a life upon a low plane, permissible to us, while there is a higher, purer life within our reach; that it is nobler not to love the pleasant things of earth, while yet to love them is not sinful. This is utter confusion of moral ideas. Nothing less than the best that we see and know is required of any one of us. Nothing more than the best that we see and know is possible to any one of us. There is no second best in morals. There is only a right and a wrong. He who is doing right is on the highest moral and spiritual level. He who sees a better within his reach, and deliberately refuses it, is not doing right at all. He is simply immoral and irreligious. I have spent an hour in amusing myself. Did I do wrong? Could I have done better? For me to say that the amusement was not wrong, and yet that I might have done better, is absurd. We imagine that in so saying we are setting a

high and unworldly standard of Christian attainment. On the contrary, we are admitting the fatal idea of a well-enough in the face of a possible better, an idea which is capable of sinking a man in the very bottomless pit of moral degradation.

This is not to say that we may not one day see more clearly what is best than we see it now. The law, stated more distinctly and more sternly by Jesus than by any other, is perfect and unchanging. Its applications are according to our seeing, and must vary. Two persons may be doing exactly opposite things, and each be doing right. But there are not two courses, a lower and a higher, set before the same person, between which he is at liberty to choose. When I see that a certain course of action is not the very best and highest I can pursue, that instant such a course becomes utterly wrong and sinful for me.

As there is no less-than-right which is yet sufficient, so there is no more-than-right which is over and above the requirement. The idea is not uncommon that justice is what we ought to do, and mercy something

which we may give or withhold. This might be true if the law were what the Pharisees conceived it to be, an external rule. Jesus demands a righteousness which shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. The limit, and the only limit, of our duty is our ability. He who gives alms to the needy is not bestowing of grace that which he is free to withhold did he so prefer. The law of love knows no withholding.

Mercy is not the abrogation of law or the lessening of requirement. Forgiveness is not the condoning of offenses. Jesus did not come to tell us that we might have our badness overlooked, but that we might become good. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

CHAPTER XVIII.—REDEMPTION

"CAN the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Is the law so stern? Is there no recovery of

lost uprightness? When our evil choices have long conspired with our inherited tendencies, frightful is the malady of the soul. Nature is not without healing for the body. Is there any help for the soul? Yes; in God there is help, for he is a redeeming God. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." The knowledge of an all-wise, beneficent Creator, awful in his goodness and purity, were but bitterness to us without the knowledge of his willingness and power to redeem sinners. What have we to do with the good and the pure? Only to abhor the more the abject meanness of our guilt. But he can save. We may become fit to be called his children. He is a God who goes forth to seek the lost. This is no cheap and easy redemption. Think of that Christ-life, the patience, the humiliation, the suffering, the temptation, the agony, the cross. And when by infinite love and infinite patience we are won to repentance, then what struggle with old habits, what slow stumbling in the path of virtue! What a maimed and crippled soul it is, after all, the soul that has sinned! Full and free is

the redeeming grace, yet not easily may the leopard change his spots. But there is all eternity before us. Trust, O my soul, and look up!

My sins, my sins, my Saviour!
They take such hold on me,
I am not able to look up,
Save only, Christ, to thee;
In thee is all forgiveness,
In thee abundant grace,
My shadow and my sunshine
The brightness of thy face.

My sins, my sins, my Saviour!
How sad on thee they fall!
Seen through thy gentle patience,
I tenfold feel them all;
I know they are forgiven,
But still their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on thee.

CHAPTER XIX.—FREEDOM

THE brute is free from the binding force of moral law; the more slave he. The man is free because he is bound. He is free to control his appetites by bringing them under obedience to the law. This is the only freedom worthy of the name. Nobody does

as he pleases but he who pleases to do right. He who like the animals follows impulse does a thousand things which by no means please him after they are done. He is in leading-strings.

Jesus has given a perfect statement of the law in his two commandments. Every man who perfectly obeys this law is free from all other laws, rules, and regulations whatsoever; not free to set them aside recklessly at the bidding of impulse, but free to keep them of choice and not of compulsion. The young and the superficial think that to be free from rules means to do the things which the rules forbid. On the contrary, a man may be quite as free in obeying laws as in disregarding them.

God made us to be free. How is it that, free-born sons of God, we are ready to sell ourselves daily for so small a price? We have been Satan's bond-servants, and the habits of our servitude are strong upon us. When shall we stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free?

CHAPTER XX.—THIS PRESENT EVIL
WORLD

THE world may be contemplated under many aspects. At times the thought of the awful wickedness that is and has been upon this earth falls upon the soul with a crushing weight, and rests there, and will not be put away. The mind travels through the ages, and dwells upon the blackest pages of human history, those records of cruelty and treachery, and selfish greed and untamed passion, working woe unutterable. Then the thoughts run round and round the globe, and the heart sinks in beholding the sins now crying to heaven from every corner of every land. Then, when we see the little children, how the awful peril of temptation seems inwrought in their very life, in body and in mind, and how the conditions outside them work together with their very nature, till it seems a miracle if any escape ruin; then our soul writhes in agony and doubt, and nothing can fit our mood but those blasphemous words of Omar :

O thou who man of baser earth didst make,
And e'en with Paradise devise the snake,
For all the sin wherewith the face of man
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take.

We feel our own guilt for the sins we have committed, but we feel something besides—the sense of an awful power, a downward current, against which men and women, and most of all the tender infants, have scarce strength to fight. One is tempted for a moment to believe that the race is, as some theologians have taught, accursed, or to conceive a malignant demon who has us in his grasp. The heart rebels, the spirit fails. We are all but ready to curse God and die.

Gethsemane and Calvary rise up before me. Ah, God, the guilt is ours! The agony thou sharest with us. The heart that hardened itself before thy creative power and sovereign will is humbled in the dust before thy suffering love. Thou hast done all things well. We see it not, but trust. Forgive that profane daring that thought to accuse thee. Thou hast not made us to give us over to destruction. The power of evil shall be broken. There is no fear, there is no doubt.

CHAPTER XXI.—JUSTICE AND MERCY

THERE is a technical or legal justice, and there is a moral justice. They are sometimes the same and sometimes not. When I say that my neighbor ought, in strict justice, to pay me what he owes, but that I may in mercy remit part of the debt, I speak of legal justice. Morally, I ought or I ought not, according to circumstances, to remit a part or the whole of the debt. If I ought to remit it, it is morally unjust, though legally just, to require payment. If I ought not to remit payment, it is not a merciful thing to remit it. That is to say, in the moral realm justice and mercy are one and inseparable.

Neither legally nor morally is there any such thing as retributive justice. The very idea of such a thing implies that offenses and sufferings can be weighed in balances, so much pain for so much wrong-doing. The notion is absurd. The only standard of rewards and penalties is the highest good of all concerned.

Legally, a man who has broken a law may be said to deserve the penalty. Morally, there is no such thing as deserving punishment or reward. The good deserve to be approved, not to be rewarded; the bad deserve to be condemned, not to be punished. It is unjust to condemn the innocent, or to clear the guilty. It is not necessarily unjust to inflict suffering upon the innocent or to let the guilty go free. If it is for the highest good of all that either the innocent or the guilty should be made to suffer, it is both just and merciful to make them suffer to whatever extent is necessary. If it is consistent with the highest good of all to remit penalty, it is just and merciful to remit it.

God's justice is moral justice, since his law is moral law. Therefore we see great inequalities in his dealings. Legal justice strives after equality of dealing. Moral justice ignores it. Nothing in the parables of Jesus is plainer than this. Those who labored all day in the vineyard, and those who worked but one hour, received every man a penny. God condemns the sinner; he pro-

nounces him guilty. That is just. He may or may not punish the sinner. If it will be good for the sinner to be punished, it is both merciful and just to punish him. If it will be good for the sinner to go unpunished, it is both just and merciful to leave him unpunished. God forgives the repentant sinner. What does that mean? It means that he removes the sentence of moral condemnation. That is just, for the sinner, led to repentance by the sacrifice of Christ and the ministration of the Spirit, is now righteous. But, though now no longer under condemnation, he may need to suffer the penalty of his past sins. Forgiveness does not imply remission of penalty. God will mercifully punish all those who can be benefited by punishment, repentant or unrepentant.

Through the sacrifice of Christ and the ministration of the Spirit the sinner is redeemed from sin to uprightness. Is it in justice or in mercy that God, at this cost, goes to seek the lost? In both, for they are inseparable still. In justice, not because the lost deserve forgiveness, for there is no

such thing as desert. In justice as well as in mercy, because if God could save, and did not save, he were unjust.

Lord God, I fear thee; yet I fear thee not. I am unclean. Punish me, but not in thy displeasure. Now am I one with thee through thy redeeming grace, and my will is as thy will. I fear thy wrath, but I fear not thy rod.

CHAPTER XXII.—GUIDANCE

WE seem to be always choosing, daily, hourly, in things great and small. How much of this choice is only seeming, who shall say? Few go through life without reaching the conclusion that there is a power outside us which directs our path. Where, then, our boasted freedom? That a man goes here or there unconsciously guided by an external power, while seeming to himself to choose, is a mystery. That a man is saved or lost, good or bad, by decree of an external power is a contradiction. We may accept a mystery—a contradiction, never.

God's will, working in some mysterious way with man's will, directs the events of his life. In the supreme moral choice, the attitude of his will toward the moral law, that which determines man's character and destiny, man is absolutely free.

For the rest, who of us could wish or dare to be left alone to his own choice where to go and what to do? One alone in all the universe has power and wisdom, and that power and wisdom is ready for the service of the weakest and the lowest of us. Yet we rebel against control, so slow to learn the lesson that we are not fit to walk alone. One would think it the simplest and easiest of all lessons — yes, and the sweetest, too. Our greedy passions are stronger than our faith and love.

It is life that makes faith hard. No; the lesson is not easy, after all. It is hard to see all things go wrong. It is hard to see the good cause fail. It is hard to see the wicked triumph. It is hard to be compelled by what we call the force of circumstances to do one thing while it seems so plain that we ought to be doing another.

Yet how foolish to fancy that we know how things ought to go; know what is failure or what is success, what is good for us to do. One knows. When we have learned to know him and to trust him, then life is sweet, then the yoke is easy and the burden light. We still long for many things, but we do not chafe or fret.

Ask him not, then, when or how,
Only bow.

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE PRAYERS OF THE INNOCENT

“GOD be merciful to me a sinner” is the undertone of all our praying. Often it is the only form of words our lips can frame. So inwrought is this petition in our very thought of prayer, that we scarce conceive of any prayer without it, except as pharisaical. What warrant have we, because we are sinners, to narrow our conception of the communion of the created spirit with the uncreated to that which is appropriate to sinners?

There are, perhaps, in the universe, multitudes of innocent children of the Father. How do they pray? The thought fascinates. How awful, how forever unattainable to us, to adore the divine righteousness, themselves also from the beginning of their existence perfect in righteousness; to pray for the bringing into the kingdom of all who are outside, themselves never having been outside; to submit to the divine will, conscious that they never have rebelled; to ask for bread, without the thought that they have grieved the love that gives it; to dread temptation, yet not to shudder as those who have been vanquished by it. Only one petition of the perfect prayer need they omit, yet for us the spirit of that one petition runs through all the rest. He that must once say, "Forgive," can never again say any words just as before.

Ah, my soul, think not these thoughts too far. "Never again" is all too sad a word. The Father would not have thee overshadow with the remembrance of infinite loss the infinite gain of thy redemption. If to have thee back again is enough for him, let it be enough for thee.

CHAPTER XXIV.—ONE OF US

“DID one of us,” said my little friend —trying to make the evolution idea throw some light upon his deepest problem—“Did one of us get to be God?” Not that, my child. We must be content if they will let us believe that we have gotten to be man. The child had evidently some dim idea that we are something else than a collection of individuals. And so, my little man, if we ever do rise to a higher plane of development, it will be the indissoluble body of us, and not any one alone.

One of us! Oh, to discern the relation between that one, absolutely separate and alone, which each knows himself to be, and that race-unit which we quite as surely are. How shall a man reach the highest which is possible to him? A prophet of culture will bid him isolate himself, think his own thought, live his own life, “demand not that the things without him yield him love, amusement, sympathy.” “Who finds himself,” says such a teacher, “loses his misery.”

On the contrary, a prophet of humanity would have us seek a common, not a separate, good,

And move together, gathering a new soul —
The soul of multitudes.

“Men live together; they think alone,” says the philosopher, uttering a partial truth which does not solve the problem. It is only in our systems that the intellect is a separate department of man’s nature. We live together, and by the same token we may not think alone. It is the race which thinks. It is the race which is attaining truth. The spirit of the age, the temper of its mind, appears in the bootblack as well as in the system-maker. There is no more pitiful thing upon this pitiful earth than pride of intellect.

In a very limited sense can it be said that “man thinks alone.” He grasps such ideas as are at hand, and handles them according to his power and the earnestness of his endeavor. To think is a sacred duty, and every man is left alone to do that duty or to leave it undone, as in all other moral choices. No other can act for him, no other

can reach conclusions for him. But let no man dare the attempt to isolate his thought. The result of that attempt is always some strange thing, a thing without life. Men wonder, and smile, and pass on. One man alone has scant material for thought. A widening experience is the mightiest overthrower of conclusions. One day of deep emotional experience may scatter the results of many days of careful and consistent reasoning. Thus it is that there are systems of doctrine mailed in invulnerable logic, where the intellect can find no flaw, against which, nevertheless, the soul of man has rebelled and will rebel. Some have said, therefore, that logic is misleading, and our reasoning powers are not to be trusted. Not so. The Maker has not given us a will-o'-the-wisp for our guidance. The syllogism is a perfect instrument, and like all instruments has a limited value. A perfect chisel cannot hew a marble statue out of a block of wood. Correct syllogisms do not insure infallible conclusions. What we want is more of that rich tide of sympathy, the common life-blood which flows through the universe of being—

yes, the universe of being, for not even the race of man is a unity large enough. It is not enough for a man to find himself; or rather no man truly finds himself until he finds himself to be simply one of us.

CHAPTER XXV.—SELF-ABNEGATION

JESUS taught self-sacrifice; self-abnegation he did not teach. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If, then, I am not to love myself at all, how much am I to love my neighbor? "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If, then, it is not blessed to receive, where is the blessedness of giving? "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." The life is of worth; it is not destroyed, but given; it is not given for the sake of giving, nor because we have learned not to prize it, but "for my sake"; and it is saved to the individual soul.

There are those who have taught the annihilation of self as the purest and most exalted form of Christian doctrine. "Yet Paul

does not summon us to give up our rights. Love strikes much deeper. It would have us not seek them at all, ignore them, eliminate the personal element altogether from our calculations." "The more difficult thing still is not to seek things for ourselves at all." "The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having and getting anything, but only in giving." This teaching may be pure and lofty, but it is not Christian teaching. Not only is it not the most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching; it is not in Christ's teaching at all. Jesus never taught anything that is unreasonable or impossible. To require that which cannot be done is to require that which ought not to be done, and the result is to debase character, not to uplift it. If men accept in theory any other rule than that reasonable rule of right conduct to which every one can conform, they in fact release themselves from all obligation. They readily excuse themselves for base living, because the thing which they conceive to be noble is beyond them. An impracticable law is practical lawlessness.

Eliminate the personal element? The personal self is that to which all values stand related. To eliminate it would leave a valueless universe. If I blot out myself, and you blot out yourself, there is nobody left in existence. If there is no happiness in getting, giving resolves itself into this: for the sake of my own happiness in giving it, I give you something which will bring you no happiness in getting it. This is the extreme of selfishness. Upon so vicious a circle do we start in trying to attain extreme unselfishness by self-abnegation.

We have indeed the utmost need to strive after unselfishness. How attain it? Not by ceasing to seek or find profit and gratification for ourselves. The good God has made that impossible. Not one of us can live a day without seeking and finding profit and pleasure in the simplest and most necessary acts. How, then, become unselfish, if not by annihilating self? By remembering that I am one small self among myriads of other selves. How lightly weighs my good against that of a hundred others close about me! Let me not grasp after my own so eagerly,

hold it so near, that it will make me blind to all the rest. I would not prize less the things for which I long, but I would see more clearly how you prize the things for which you long. Oh, to see values not from the standpoint of one soul, but from the standpoint of many souls! Then would the demon of selfishness be cast out, then might one reach that glad, free, calm, and unfretted life which knows its great treasure, the happiness of the many, to be beyond all risk of loss, in the eternal purpose of God.

CHAPTER XXVI.—INASMUCH AS YE DID
IT NOT

MASTER, I have this day broken no law of the ten, have hurt no one. Is it enough?

Child, there stood one at thy side burdened with heavy tasks of lowly, earthly labor. For a little help, a little easing of the burden, he looked to thee. Thou hadst time and strength.

Master, I did not see.

Thine eyes were turned within. There

was an ignorant one crying from out his darkness, "Will none teach me?" I have given thee knowledge.

Master, I did not hear.

Thine ear was dull. There came a guest to seek thy converse, a human friend in quest of fellowship. I marked thy sigh, thy frown. Why was thy heart not glad?

I was reading. I hate to be disturbed, to be called from great thoughts to trifling talk.

The children would have had thee some few moments in their play. Without thee they went wrong—how far wrong thou wilt not know. It is too late.

Child's play? But I was searching for a hidden truth of spiritual import.

Thou didst not turn aside to lift that lame one who had fallen by the way.

I was in haste to do what I had planned. I meant to help him when I should return.

Another lifted him. And shall I question further? Dost thou not yet see? Child, my heart yearns over thee. Dost say thou hast hurt none to-day? Thou hast hurt many, and thyself not least. Not one of the ten laws hast thou broken? Thou hast robbed

these thy brothers of that which I did give to thee in trust for them. In all thy eager grasping to save thy life thou hast this day lost it. Thou art smaller, poorer, blinder than this morn thou wert, after all thy reading, thinking, planning, doing. Where, where this day has been thy loving? When thou dost ask, "Is it enough?" there thou dost hurt me. Enough? Dost thou then grudge? Wilt thou weigh and measure? Wilt thou bargain with me? Art thou looking for a least requirement? Child, thou grievest me much.

Master, love me still and teach me, for I have the more need.

Fear not; I will not leave thee. Thou shalt one day know what it is to love.

CHAPTER XXVII.—GIVING

THERE is a pride which debases—the spirit which scorns or condescends to converse with an inferior. There is a pride which ennobles—the spirit which scorns a

mean act. Perchance the pride which debases is baser when it condescends than when it scorns. He who gives in condescension is too proud. He who will not take as a gift that which he needs and cannot get by his own labor is too proud. He who is ready to take from the product of another's labor that which he is too indolent to win for himself is not proud enough.

Every man who is doing honest work in the world is giving. Some of us are getting far more than we are giving. Some are getting almost nothing. How things are to be made more even is the question. Whether it can be done by more giving depends upon the way of giving.

Giving is not a condescension. I must not assume that because another man is poorer than I, I have a right to give him something. To fling him an alms may be an insult. A gift may serve only to degrade him. Let me look carefully at myself, at him, and at the gift, before I dare bestow. Some of us have been too prone to think it quite proper that we should have most of the good things, and should bestow of our su-

perfluity upon the rest of mankind, while they, duly feeling their dependence upon our bounty, are grateful. Perhaps, were the situation reversed, we should not be so ready to accept it. We are very willing to take for ourselves the more blessed part, the part of the giver, and then to make a virtue of it. We expect others to be thankful for being in a position which we are glad we are not in. We talk quite glibly about "the lower classes," as if any one of us could define the lower classes. There are natural inequalities among men, since some are stronger, mentally and bodily, than others. But most of the inequalities are factitious. Since they have been made, they can be unmade. How often has society presented us the spectacle of a child of the lowest ancestry attaining wealth, power, learning, refinement, virtue? We are of one blood. There are no lower classes.

"The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all." And in what spirit shall they meet together to worship their Maker? Shall the one say, "Sensible of my superiority, yet knowing that we

are equal before God, I come down to worship with you. We meet on a level here"; and the other, "Sensible of my inferiority, I yet make bold to worship with you"? Such condescension and servility are more shocking here than anywhere else. Such a spirit shows an utter ignorance of true relations. It is to say, "There is a great, essential, and enduring difference between you and me; yet there is one ground upon which we can meet." It is to say that we are not of one blood.

The truth is that our equality far transcends our inequality. Before the respect due to personality, all differences and distinctions, natural and artificial, pass out of sight. Every person has the same separate existence, the same absolute moral sovereignty, the same inalienable rights.

Love is the heart and soul of all giving that is profitable to men. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." It may also profit nothing those who receive the gift. It may be even ruinous to them.

He who loves will give nothing vainly, nothing proudly, nothing carelessly, nothing for the mere pleasure of giving. He will give not merely his spare pence, but his thoughts, his heart, his life.

The one gift, after all, is the gift of a man's self for use and helpfulness. The rich man who gives much money with earnest care and thought to make it do the most good is giving himself. The poor man who can give no money, if he is giving faithful work, is giving himself. The gifts are substantially equal. Hence disappears that seeming division into givers and receivers of charities. We are all givers, all of us who are honest and faithful. May the day come when the getting will be as equal as the giving is.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—COMPETITION

Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition.

DESIRE was implanted in our very nature by the divine wisdom of the Creator. Therefore none can say desire is sinful, but only

that indulgence of desire may, under certain conditions, be sinful. The desire to outstrip another in getting that which we cannot both have, may we doubt whether that also is natural and necessary? Must it be our rule of life? Must we fight for the prizes?

The idea seems inconsistent with the thought that we are one family, children of a common Father. Surely, in a family it is not thought necessary or right to compete. If there are two children, and only bread enough for one, must each strive to grasp the whole, and must it go to the stronger and quicker? Is this a law of nature which cannot be set aside without danger to the constitution of the family? I will not dare to ask the deeper question how there can be an all-powerful and loving Father who provides but half enough bread.

Are we in literal fact one family, children of a common Father, or is that but an imperfect analogy? One hesitates to say that the whole teaching of Jesus is based upon a figure of speech. No; let us not say that. His teaching is simple and true. Both the

broader and the minuter applications of it are extremely difficult and complex. The world has during these centuries been advancing slowly and surely in making these applications. There were social institutions in the early centuries that were universally supposed to be natural and necessary, which our age has seen overthrown by this very doctrine of human brotherhood. Society has survived their overthrow. Men are to-day striving to work out new applications of the principles of Jesus. It may be that another generation will see results. It may be we shall one day cease to live by snatching the bread from our brother's mouth. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

CHAPTER XXIX.—THIS WORLD AND ANOTHER

"I AM glad there is immortality, but would have tested it myself before intrusting him." Thus it is with us. "There is

immortality," we say; "there is undoubtedly." And then we fall a-doubting. All those speculative arguments with which for ages mankind have been trying to support hope do little to cure us of this habit. Nor can I think that we shall ever, by weighing and measuring, prove the existence of spirit unembodied or disembodied.

One thing at least is certain: there is something beyond, or there is nothing here. We have set our standard of values in the hope of immortality. All the satisfactions of this present life, sweet as they are, are infinitely less than our craving. Perchance they satisfy the brute. We know not the mind of the brute. Is there for us anything beyond? Since Jesus says our life does not end with the death of the body, I am content to believe him in that as in other things.

About the nature of the life after death we are told very little, chiefly this—that the character we form here we carry with us there. Had it been important for us to know more, it seems likely that we should have been told more. It is an unfit subject for dogmatism, but the mind inevitably

forms its conceptions, consonant with its ideas of God and man, its hopes, its longings, and its fears.

Some conceive death as the entering of the soul into a haven of rest. Others think that we shall

Strive and thrive, speed — fight on, fare ever
There as here.

“My Father worketh hitherto,” says Jesus, “and I work.” Shall we not also work? Why should I think that I shall be at all different the moment after death from what I was the moment before? And if we are the same, shall we not still need to be struggling upward, to help and save one another?

Thou shalt be still a child of God as thou art here. What wilt thou have? Rest? Thou art even now at rest in the bosom of God. Joy? Thinkest thou there is greater joy than the joy of serving? Thou hast it here. Home? “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Thou hast long dwelt at home. The presence of God? He is all-present to thee here and

now. To behold his face? Death will give thee no new eyes. Look, if thou wouldst behold him. Freedom from pain? Who knows if thou mayest have that? If thou shouldst die to-night, wilt thou need no more refining in the furnace? And even if thou sufferest no more, wilt thou feel no pain for others' woes? Is it then freedom from sin for which thou art longing? Who is Death that he should have power suddenly to free thee from sin? Art thou not gaining step by step a constancy in sinlessness, and can it be won otherwise than step by step though thou shouldst die to-night?

And is this all? Is there no consummation, no "far-off, divine event"? It is written, "There shall be no more curse." What does that mean? I cannot tell what it means. He who wrote it seems to think there will still be some accursed.

"In the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." I dare not

say that these words mean what the heart could wish them to mean. Can God finally conquer even the most hardened? We know not. How can we know when he has not told us? Could it be so, that were a home-coming indeed, perfect joy, tears wiped from off all faces. If it can never be, my Lord, I ask no perfect joy, I can conceive of none. If there be any yet in sin, thou wilt not cease to weep; I ask to weep with thee.

CHAPTER XXX.—THE KINGDOM

THE world is good; beauty and wealth and knowledge and power, they are all good, to be desired and to be enjoyed. What then? Get and keep and live at ease? No; that is death, not life. Get and give, not get and keep, is the law of the universe. How ignoble that ancient conception of divinity, "the ever-living gods who dwell at ease."

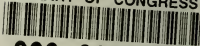
The man, that only lives and loves an hour,
Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.

The Deity is not an idle monarch, pleased with contemplating his own glory, and creating a universe of suffering and struggling beings to promote his glory and self-satisfaction. He is not content to abide in a blissful heaven. He is among us as one that serveth. Woe to that man who will not also serve, for he shall die. There is a kingdom, and it is coming. It is in our power to hasten it or to retard it, not to stop it. It is the kingdom of God and his loving subjects. If a man will take his place in that kingdom and work together with God and his fellow-men to put an end to sin and suffering, he shall live and grow, and he shall yet rejoice to see the kingdom come. If a man will cut himself off from that fellowship, and try to attain to something by himself, he shall fail. He may take his ease in his wealth, and care not who is poor while he is rich; he may take his ease in his learning, and care not who is ignorant while he is learned; he may take his ease in his religion, and care not who is lost if he is saved; he may take his ease in his virtue, and care not who is wicked if he is

upright. He will lose his soul. Neither his money, nor his learning, nor his piety, nor his virtue, shall save him. There is no life for any single man apart from the life of all other men. Our own soul, our own family, our own church, our own country, will not be safe till the world is safe. Let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not think that by shutting out what is corrupt we can keep sound that which is within. The law of the kingdom will not be broken. We are all bound together. If we will not lift our neighbor up, he shall drag us down. Would we be clean, we and our own beloved? We must cleanse all the vileness in the world.

The kingdom is surely coming, God's blessed kingdom of love and joy. O my soul, wilt thou have thy place within or without? Choose between life and death. Arouse thee, work, for the time is at hand. "He which testifieth these things saith, 'Surely, I come quickly.' Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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