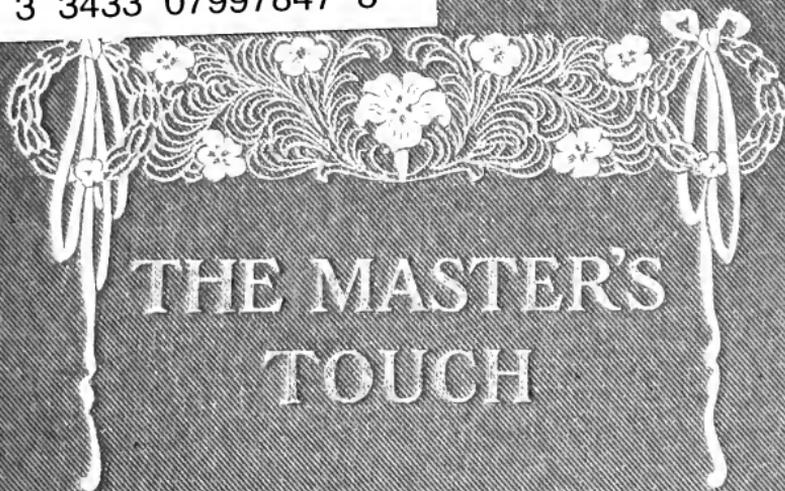


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THE MASTER'S
TOUCH

WENTWORTH F.
STEWART

☆ Fatherless WEEKLY

1911

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The Master's Touch

By
Wentworth F. Stewart

With an Introduction by
J. T. McFarland



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INTRODUCTION

Whoever attempts to write a book for young people, all literary skill aside, should have at least three qualifications for the task—understanding of those whom he addresses, genuine sympathy with young life, and a practical but high aim.

The understanding required is no mere matter of general scientific knowledge of human nature and the human mind. It is a question of human nature and the human mind in a certain stage of growth. It is a matter of vitalities and the conditions under which those vitalities operate. I am now speaking of young people coming toward maturity, not of mature young men and women; of that zone of life defined on the one hand by the beginning of adolescence, and the boundaries of manhood and womanhood on the other. This beyond all comparison is life's

most fateful belt of years, in which the conditions of all subsequent success or failure are chiefly determined. This is not ground upon which a blunderer should enter. He who treads here should take heed, for he is among the great forces of life. He is dealing with vital combustibles and explosives.

How do such young people see things? What are the viewpoints from which they look? What perspectives have they of the real interests of life? With what system of measurement is the tapeline marked by which they measure things? Of what material and in what denominations is the money in which they reckon the riches of life? These and many other questions like them must be answered by one who can be of any service to them in counsel. It will not do for him to look upon life, as it appears to them, through the spectacles of age; he must look through the glasses of youth upon their problems before the wisdom of his mature experience can be applied to their help.

Without sympathy the failure of such

a writer is foregone. It would be like the drumming among the keys by one ignorant of music and lacking the ear for harmony; like a breath of winter blowing over a rose garden. Your writer for young people must not simply have the vague memory that a very long time ago he was young himself; he must have the heart of youth beating in his breast while he writes. He must feel the thrill of the joy of youth, its passionate heart-throb, the quiver and leap of its aspiration, and he must at times feel his own heart coming up into his throat before the glorious visions which rise before young eyes. He cannot do much service as a censor. Scolding is a very cheap thing, and to none does it seem cheaper than to young people. There must be kindness toward even the weaknesses and follies of youth. There must be faith in the central good intent of the young. They cannot be dealt with as totally depraved. The worst of them, if we can get at their innermost feeling, desire goodness rather than wickedness. Youth is idealistic,

and in spite of all downward drawings its instinctive look is upward. These young people of ours want someone to tell them how to find the path to the heights. They really prefer mountain climbing to descending into coal pits. We may safely rely upon that, and must assume it in all our dealings with them; and we must inspire in them confidence in their ability to climb. Moral discouragement leadens the feet; courage and hopefulness give wings.

From what has just been said, the necessity for high aim in writing for young people necessarily follows. And underneath all the superficiality and frivolity of the young, they are really more anxious to find people who can inspire them with noble ambition than to find those who can amuse and entertain them. If you have a really great word to say they will listen. The genuine prophet, whose heart is full of great dreams and whose eyes see great visions, will find in young people the most sympathetic audience.

The author of this little book, I am

impressed, has these three qualifications in an unusual degree. These chapters are alive with his own palpitant love and sympathy, and are strong with the best wisdom of his reflections upon things which vitally concern those for whom he writes. He has struck deep and clear chords which cannot fail to awaken great music in many hearts.

J. T. McFARLAND.

New York City.

It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight
Once in a century;—

But better far it is to speak
One simple word, which now and then
Shall waken their free nature in the weak
And friendless sons of men;

To write some earnest verse or line,
Which, seeking not the praise of art,
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood smile
In the untutored heart.

—*Lowell.*

CHAPTER I
LIFE'S FORCES TOUCHED BY CHRIST

In the still air the music lies unheard;
In the rough marble beauty lies unseen;
To make the music and the beauty, needs
The Master's touch, the sculptor's chisel keen.
Great Master, touch us with thy skillful hand;
Let not the music that is in us die!
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let,
Hidden and lost, thy form within us lie!
Spare not the stroke! Do with us as thou wilt!
Let there be naught unfinished, broken, marred;
Complete thy purpose, that we may become
Thy perfect image, thou our God and Lord!

—*Bonar.*

LIFE'S AWAKENING

Sin and superstition have a paralyzing effect upon moral life and character, and upon all worthy ambitions, similar to that of certain forces and conditions upon the physical. They break down the sturdiest powers; they hush the inner voices that keep guard; they narrow and blur the scope of vision, and gradually reduce the life until it is infinitely less in all its ideals and aspirations than its inherent qualities call for. Such was the blighting effect sin had wrought in this old world when Jesus came. The people "walked in darkness," they dwelt in the "valley and shadow of death." Hope had nearly yielded to despair. But "in the fullness of time" the Man of Galilee appears. He moves among the ranks of hopeless men and touches their paralyzed powers into life; he lays his fingers upon blinded eyes and men awake to the light of day; and this was incidental to, and prophetic of, the great awakening to moral and spiritual vision

and ideals with which Jesus startled into a new life those who heard his voice and responded to his "Follow me."

Behold the awakening! Matthew, the tax collector, chained down to the sordid things of earth, suddenly starts at the voice of Jesus, moves out into a new world, and immortalizes himself by recording first in order the things that fill that life of which the half was never told.

Peter, a fisherman, with the petty conceptions of life this pursuit always carries with it, hears the same call; it sounds depths in his nature hitherto untouched, and he too swings out of his littleness into greatness, to become spokesman and leader of the smallest but mightiest band of men who ever attempted to overturn the world.

Paul, a narrow Jew, whose native brilliancy was chained to the limits of Jewish traditions, a slave of bitterest prejudices, whose sun rose and set within this narrow horizon, is startled at the voice of Jesus on a Damascus road; receives new sight, and a vision of such

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scope as makes him, among men, second to none save the Man of Nazareth.

These are only a few instances; all along the line of history Jesus has been laying his fingers upon the blurred and blinded vision of men, and their eyes have opened to a new world of such possibilities as they had never dreamed. He has sounded his voice amid the dark and confused mutterings of human nature's impulses, and the shock of that voice has awakened humanity to a new life; fountains have been tapped, forces resurrected, and great movements have taken shape in the souls of men.

Christianity is preëminently a great awakening. Peoples living on the same globe with us, committed to the paralyzing and degrading processes of hoary and forceless traditions, repeating the habits of centuries, without an upward step, are brought into close proximity to the energies of Christian civilization; "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," shines upon them, and they awake and outdo the achievements of centuries in a single

decade. Have you ever reflected upon the tremendous upward sweep of the Christian world? With what leaps and bounds we have moved to higher grounds! Have you ever tarried long enough to look into the deep valleys out of which since yesterday the race has been lifted? And have you considered the unlocked doors, the open secrets that meet you at the threshold of this life to-day? This, all this, is but the awakening of the Christ; elsewhere it is still night, still winter time; there is no morning sunrise, no springtime with resurrection life and hope. The awakening of a nation is a great thing, but the awakening of a soul is a greater thing, for awakened souls make awakened nations. Christ has spoken to our age and to our land. His voice has sounded in the midst of the years; his light has stolen the slumber from our eyes; his touch has filled us with life—throbbing, triumphant life.

You stand at the threshold; the door swings before you; a voice calls; it is the voice of the Christ. Listen! It

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arouses every slumbering faculty of your soul. Look! A hand of tenderness and power is stretched forth to touch the splendid harp of your senses and restore every lost chord. Behold! A light is shining, and in the radiance of that light life blossoms out into a new and glorious significance. Awake, awake! "for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

LIFE'S UNFOLDING

There are buds that fold within them, closed and
covered from our sight,
Many a richly tinted petal never looked on by the
light.
Fain to see their shrouded faces, sun and dew are
long at strife,
Till at length the sweet buds open; such a bud is
life. —Ingelow.

Few things are more wonderful than the unfolding of life, even life of the lower orders. An ugly, lifeless-looking bulb that has lain all winter in the dark cellar, brought out and exposed to springtime sun and rain and planted in fertile soil, unfolds with marvelous rapidity out of its ugliness into a thing of beauty and fragrance.

Mr. Burbank, the "wizard" of horticulture, has performed some wonderful feats in the development of plant life. Not long since, he tried his skill upon the cactus, a plant so uncomely and unlikely of development as to seem more like a lifeless formation than a real living thing; but, by the magic skill of Mr.

Burbank's releasing, redeeming, and unfolding touch, this lowly specimen was made to bring forth beautiful flowers and bear fruit possessed of enough food qualities to fully sustain the life of man or beast in any desert.

It is observed that Mr. Burbank moves with peculiar reverence among these specimens, and to follow him makes one feel he is in sacred fellowship, so divine-like are the manifestations of these glorious unfoldings. He finds in all these ugly bulbs and lower orders the germ of a larger life awaiting a redeeming touch to unfold it.

That more abundant life which Jesus came to bring is not an artificial change, but an unfolding of the life that is in us by the infinite touch of the great supernatural artist. We are born again, not in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense, "from above." The divine reaches down to our divineness—releases, revives, renews, and unfolds it.

Education was once a mechanical operation; the teacher brought so many facts and poured them into the scholar,

and the scholar received them regardless of the stupidity of it all. How many souls have been stifled by such a process! This kind of education puts limits upon us. Now we use another process; we bring facts and forces without to bear upon facts and forces of the scholar's consciousness, and that consciousness wakes up, opens out, verifies the truth, and feels its way to endless knowledge. Education was once a diploma; it is now a growing soul.

Religion is not a creed, but an unfolding life. This process of unfolding is by the influence of Christianity or of Christ upon our lives, by a personal and full response to all the graciousness of that influence, opening every avenue of life to his incoming.

Suppose it were within the power of the plant to say, "I will not respond to God's forces; he may send his rain and sunshine, put me in his warm and fertile soil, bring the most skillful and divine-like human agencies to my rescue, but I will make no answer, give no response, but close my crusty shell against

all these," then there could be no unfolding flower. Suppose the child should say, "I will not respond to light, to air, to truth, to appeals to body and mind," then the child would remain a child. So unless the soul opens up, answers back, responds to the graciousness of the Christ, there can be no grand unfolding of the inner being.

To realize the higher, larger life of Christianity we must respond to every impulse which the Master seeks to touch into an aspiration. If you were trying an experiment in a laboratory you would watch with deepest interest every indication of effect and give the elements every chance of operation. If you want to know what Jesus Christ can do for you and make of you more than you are, go into his great laboratory with a prayerful heart and respond to every touch of his power and every direction of his will. If you have tried thinking, now try doing. We gain our supreme facts about nature not by meditating upon theories, but by observing the operations of phenomena.

“He that willeth to do my will shall know.”

Christianity is not a theory, but a life; we grow by application; we unfold by his fellowship into the likeness of Him whose will we follow. There is nothing more beautiful, more interesting and attractive, than the unfolding of a young life as it passes from stage to stage of physical and mental development, from childhood to manhood or womanhood, under the kindly forces and the wise directions with which Providence has surrounded it. But it is not complete until it surrenders likewise to the gracious influence and direction of Him who crowns life with the divine image; for there slumber in every one of us not merely the glorious possibilities of manhood or womanhood, but the diviner possibilities of discipleship with the Christ.

“THE AGELESS LIFE”

Life seems almost to begin at spring-time. It is a kind of new creation—a regeneration; old things pass away and all things become new. The old world aroused wakes up, yawns, rubs its blurred and drowsy eyes, and begins again its march. The beasts creep forth from their dark dens and shake themselves into fuller consciousness; the insect at your feet pushes aside the clod of earth and opens its dim eyes; the little shrub, bent low by winter's snows and paralyzed by its cruel frost, lifts its bowed head and through its long-clogged arteries the streams of life begin to flow.

These hopes inspire the most charming songsters to chant their loftiest notes from the bough above your head, while the cricket in the crevice at your feet seems to be playing the accompaniment.

It must be more than an incident that Easter comes at springtime; indeed, there is a wondrous note of harmony in

all God's world; the Easter message is infinitely more significant when all nature joins in the resurrection song.

The resurrection of Jesus breaks the world's winter of despair; it takes away from our drooping spirits that greatest and most disheartening of all interrogations, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Ancient literature brings down across the years no cheerful note; its voice is somber; it is the throb of a dreary civilization that "clusters around the tomb rather than the temple." Its golden age is always in the past and not the future; it tells of a beautiful paradise lost but nothing of "a new heaven and a new earth," because the world's hopes are locked in the embrace of death.

Tradition tells of an ancient tomb in an old German town, the burial place of one of the old nobility; the grave was covered with a massive stone fastened by huge iron clamps and upon it this inscription: "Sealed for all time, must never be opened." But a little seed found its way down into the crevice of the rock and there took root and grew:

first a little sprig, then a young tree, and in time expanded; its roots penetrated and burst asunder the iron clamps and opened the long-sealed grave. It was the power of life, and it was mightier than the seal of death.

Winter's frost blights life and paralyzes its hopes; it reaches forth its fingers and touches the leaf, causing it to fall crisp and lifeless at your feet; it extends its mighty arms and holds the charms of nature in its deathly grip; it tramples and buries everything beneath its massive forces, and with its imposing, hoary form defies the orb of day on its burning march across the sky, as much as to say, "Sealed for all time." But by and by the old sun gets new marching orders; orders to rise earlier, soar higher, set later; orders to fill up its furnaces anew and to send its fiery forces in persistence down upon the stubborn frost; winter's grasp is broken, and with resurrection power the old world breaks from the embrace of death.

What a picture presents itself when the resurrection forces operate at spring-

time! What hopes revive as every living thing, turning its face skyward, smiles and wakes its sweetest song!

With the springtime of nature and its resurrection charms comes also the waking of our immortal hopes, for the breaking of winter is but a faint analogy of the breaking of the bands that bind in death's awful grasp. How sad and uninviting is life even to-day in the land where no Easter lilies bloom and no Easter hope lifts the dreary spell of death with its gloomy aspects and dark forebodings!

Do we appreciate what it means to begin our journey's march in a land of Easter vision and dreams, without the limitations of threescore years and ten, the beginning of an endless journey only interrupted by the incident of death, that "this mortal may put on immortality"?

On the old narrow-gauge road from Lynn to Boston Ferry, just before the train reaches the station it shoots suddenly into a short tunnel. Many times have we seen timid persons, unfamiliar

with the road, shrink with fear; but their fear quickly subsides, for in a moment the light breaks, the passengers lift their eyes to the beautiful harbor and the grand old city in full view. Since Jesus Christ passed through the tomb and walked out triumphantly, death has lost its victory; it is only the valley and the shadow, and shadows can never stay; they have to vanish before the rising of the splendid light that radiates from the tomb of Jesus. This is our hope: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

O, what a gift is this that life opens up to us, not merely for a short and uncertain day and then night, eternal night; but with the vision of an "ageless life" of which death is merely a brief interruption, for as he lives we shall live also. We can with this hope make our plans for life as far-reaching as we will; there are upon us no limitations, for what mortality doth not permit to finish, immortality surely will.

CHAPTER II
LIFE THAT IS LIFE INDEED

He liveth long who liveth well!
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain.

* * *

Be what thou seemest! live thy creed!
Hold up to earth the torch divine;
Be what thou prayest to be made;
Let the great Master's steps be thine.

Fill up each hour with what will last;
Build up the moments as they go;
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below. —*Bonar.*

GETTING READY TO LIVE

An eminent Scotch divine once asked a friend of Professor Drummond how it was that Mr. Drummond made such a profound impression upon the young. His answer was, "Because he emphasizes 'saving life.'" Young people had been taught that death was a serious thing for which they were to prepare, but Mr. Drummond made them feel that life was far more serious, and that for this they should prepare. This was to many young people a new idea; they had always been taught that they could not die without Christ, but now they were learning that they could not live without Christ.

Never was there a time when so much emphasis was placed upon getting ready for life and its work as to-day. Out from our schools each year go thousands of young men and women prepared by most careful drill and discipline to meet life's duties. Here they have been getting ready to live. This is a time also

when great care is taken to give the most apt direction to the dispositions and gifts of boys and girls for life's service. The time is past when life is considered a mere chance, but it is believed that for everyone there is some place of peculiar fitness, a real program of life that may be worked out; not that all may have the most exalted place, but, inasmuch as it is difficult to tell what part of the game of life is most significant, the main thing is to be sure to be in that place which one can most successfully fill. It is not mere fatality to believe that there is a place and a part in this world's work for everyone, however humble that task may be.

But getting ready to live means something more than is included in that which is purely material. When a young man starts for the city he aims to be rich, or carve his name in some lofty place; to sit upon some kind of throne of power. This is right if it does not blind his vision to the nobler things. Steam, electricity, and the great forces of nature are rich with blessing when

considered as a means, not an end, and when controlled toward that end; but when great forces control us we become slaves rather than masters, and the means of living becomes an end. There should be something in our life greater than what we call accomplishments, grander than mere fame, mightier than riches. All of these, even with rarest genius, have often been accompanied by disappointment and disaster. The history of the world's success is not the history of its greatness only, but its goodness. The men who write their names on high in the spirit of their own ambitions are easily forgotten, while those whose names are written in the indelible fashion of the spirit of Jesus abide. Christlike character stays beyond all circumstances.

Said one: "If you travel through this world you may find cities without walls, literature, kings; but never shall there be a city without a chapel, a church, a temple; or a people without a God. It is this that holds society together and is the foundation of all." Religion is

not a mere luxury; it is a necessity. Life is not complete without it; and to leave religion to a secondary consideration, or to wait until we have beaten the best natural fiber into our being without considering our relation to Christ, is like constructing buildings without cement, brace, or anchor. We must not consider religion something to be attended to at any time; something we can put on or appropriate; it must become a part of us; for a true life is like a river that gathers increasing strength and momentum as it flows. Such our life will be if God comes into it early. To leave him out would be as great folly as to think of sailing the ocean regardless of the star which the mariner in all seas must not lose sight of, else he drifts to danger. Every day is telling upon the future. Character has a physical basis; childhood and youth are the track-laying periods. We shall run our life trains over the tracks we lay in youth. There will be few new roads made after we are beyond our teens. Life after middle years depends upon

the bent and the habits that study and purpose have put into it. Hear the voice of the Master, "Seek first the kingdom of God"; for it is not merely a question of saving the soul, but saving the life.

The writer had been lecturing to a popular audience on "High Ideals," pointing to the splendid possibilities for those who will strive for the largest life. At the close a man past fifty, but a fine specimen of manhood in body and heart, pushed to the front, took our hand, and, pressing it as one in great grief, exclaimed, "O, yes, but what am I to do? It is too late for me." It was unanswerable; it was too late. If such pain can seize men who have missed the mark in intellectual things and in the realization of success thereby, what must be the pain and sorrow of those who fail to reach the goal of life in fellowship with God—the goal which is the realization of the grandest things for which we are made?

Waste not thy being; back to Him
Who freely gave it, freely give;
Else is that being but a dream;
'Tis but to be, and not to live.

THE OPEN DOOR

Life is full of open doors. Some folks find fault that life's chances are so small; while our inner impulses push hard upon us to enter the larger life and corresponding visions throw their enchantment across our pathway, yet life in the larger, nobler sense seems an excluded country, barred away, with only tantalizing peeps into the glorious realm that flashes in our richest dreams, and lies unhatched within our souls. But to those of open vision and hearty impulses, with forceful wills that swing out toward infinity, life is full of open doors. These wide open doors are not all doors of knowledge, fame, or wealth. They are not doors of material reality, that, swinging on coarse iron hinges, grate upon our finer senses. They are doors that swing on the hinges of the imagination as it dreams us into that which, in time, becomes the sublimest of realities.

Such a door is the door of the new year, suggesting to us entrance into a

new life. Though it be only a matter of the calendar, it never tolls its bells and wakes us to its morning sunrises without causing to sweep before us an infinite array of possibilities. At the opening door of every new year we begin life over again; map out for ourselves a program and choose redeemers, leaders, and companions for the new year: redeemers who shall have grace and power enough to lift us to life's higher levels; leaders who shall be wise and brave enough to take us through darkest hours, across swollen streams, and into the untracked wilderness of possibility; companions who shall be able to give cheer and comfort, and whose fellowship shall strengthen and sweeten, stimulate and transform, like veritable leaven. Among those we choose are great ideals, sturdy principles, lofty purposes, and firm convictions. We find them in history, biography, and in some measure in the lives of those beside whom we move day by day.

What mean beginnings? Beginnings

are only truly such when God is in them, divinely generated and companioned. Long ago there was a beginning. That beginning was God. Did you ever think of it—"In the beginning God"? Great first words, expressive of all true beginnings! It was said of Jesus, "In the beginning was the Word"; "All things were made by him"; "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

This old world, weary of its mistakes and disappointments apart from God, began over again when Jesus came. He set a new calendar for the ages, and men began to date things before and after him. Why? Because "in him was life," abundant life. He touched the world's blind eyes and men saw the light. He opened deaf ears and men heard infinite harmonies. He fulfilled humanity's eager hopes. He broke the bonds of the prisoner, he placed stumbling feet on the rock, he made stammering tongues to sing everlasting praises and opened the world's life to a new era. He called poor, narrow-

minded, low-browed peasants and exalted them amid the sons of men, and he enlarged the horizon of the world's noblest to an immortal range.

He comes to us all now and bids us in the simple but all-commanding "Follow me" swing out into boundless possibilities in fellowship with him. In seeking a redeemer to strike the fetters and open the doors, why not seek the Redeemer to whom all power is given? In seeking a leader, why not attach ourself to Him who hath "led captivity captive" and given to men their most precious gifts, and who will lead us in the pursuit of our ideals "from victory to victory"? In seeking a companion why not take Him who never betrayed a friend; who never cast a shadow by his fellowship; but who exalts, ennobles, and inspires until we find our hearts throbbing in unison with his, our lives changed into his likeness, and our hopes reaching unto heaven?

THE SUPREME CHOICE

Once to every man and nation comes the moment
to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good
or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering
each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep
upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that dark-
ness and that light. —Lowell.

“Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.” This is the sentiment before which men go down and sell their souls more frequently than before the vulgar cry, “Crucify him, crucify him.” This day of flattering compliments, of jubilant praises, this day of carpet-paved and palm-strewn streets, was more trying to the moral fiber of the Man of Nazareth than the rugged paths of the wilderness, or the sense of loneliness that made him exclaim, “The Son of man hath not where to lay his head,” “He is despised and rejected of men.” Back yonder in the wilderness he had

determined to accept the general plan of fulfilling the Father's purpose, and he had already schooled himself in poverty and tested his soul by sacrifice. But now he had come face to face with a new test which was to be in some respects his supreme test; for it was not merely a temptation to surrender, but to compromise; it was pressed upon him by friends as well as foes. It had in it the possibilities of a short cut to the throne; and when placed over against the inevitable outcome of his present course to Calvary, how it must have appealed to every human impulse!

What a day it was! Could this old world have realized its meaning it might have ceased its march and held its breath with fear and trembling, for in the balance of this moment hung the destiny of men. But Jesus looked beyond, and in his own masterfulness lifted himself above the test and made the decision which held so much in its grasp. As the issues of the world hinged on the decision of Jesus that day, so there are days when the issues of our

lives hinge upon a single choice. There is no moment so supreme to us as when we are brought face to face with Jesus Christ and his claims, and when, having no further excuse for delay, we must determine to receive or reject him. Since Jesus Christ came into the world the only fate is the fate of choice; this is the one thing that most dignifies our life and the one thing that most endangers it. We are early thrust upon our responsibility. At first those older make our choices for us, then they lend advice, but finally they say, "You know, you must choose," and with sublime dignity we begin to tread the path of our own choosing.

Every day, as on an unfamiliar road, we come to the parting of the ways, not quite certain which to take. What shall we do at these moral crossings? Are there no guides? Must we go it blindly? Has God given us no means of distinguishing between the way that by its entrance seemeth right to man, but the end of which is death, and the way of life which "shineth more and more unto

the perfect day"? Yes, there are lights; we are possessed of instincts which are like great signals. God has his great lights hung out along the track calling to us to halt, and other lights which like the stars from out of the clear, blue sky of truth and righteousness call us over the highway. We cannot excuse ourselves that we are creatures of circumstances; that nature is overwhelmingly against us. Nature is full of helpfulness; to the higher voice within all the loftier voices without correspond. A mountain is not an enemy of life and progress, standing like a great giant in the way telling us to bow down, compromise, go around; the mountain is calling us from its summit and kindling aspirations skyward; like the stars it tells us to trample transient glory beneath our feet, and to these our souls, when free, respond. Long ago one stood transfixed beneath the stars of the firmament and cried, "What is man?" But a second thought awakes within him the greater vision: "Made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor."

The second thought always sees beyond the passing glory, and the lofty gaze always brings forth stars of true ambition within our souls, helping us to master the lesser glory and strive for the abiding crown. We are always being urged to the possession of the higher good, to the choice of the better part, and we are always in danger of being short-sighted and falling down before the lesser glory; always in danger of "hauling down the flag of the ideal before some gross reality."

Decision day is not a human invention to force us to do something we are not bound to do. Men may move the day forward or backward in the calendar, but we are bound to come not only to the crossing of the ways, but of the great thoroughfares, when a single choice embraces all the vast range of human destiny. To be prepared for this moment, to sacrifice the course that would crown us to-day but leave us desolate to-morrow, to reckon with all the future and accept the cross instead of the crown—this is the supreme heroic

choice. To us, when face to face with this issue, the example of Jesus is our source of courage and of inspiration; a few would have crowned him that day, but a few more days would have found him desolate. But by the decision of that hour he is crowned forever in the heart of the world. "The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now."

This decision day does not come to us with the suddenness of a great emergency; we are not asked to choose blindly whom we will serve; the graciousness of a peculiar Providence has brought us over a path flooded with Christian light and truth, and we have already answered the great question, "What think ye of Christ?" and answered it with unqualified approval of him and consent to his claims, and to-day we are asked to make answer to the great direct personal question, "What will you do with Jesus?" If the fate of the world is wrapped up in the acceptance of Jesus Christ, as the centuries attest, so is our fate; and as the hopes

of the Jewish nation sank with their rejection of Jesus, so our life in its supreme issue rises or falls with the decision of this day. "What will you do with Jesus?"—do with him now, to-day—accept or reject him, crown or crucify him? He already has the consent of your mind; to-day he calls for the greater decision—the affection of your heart and the service of your life. Will you bring forth these royal diamonds and "crown him Lord of all"?

CHAPTER III
PATHFINDERS

Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find him, in the evil days,
Thine all-sufficient strength and guide.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on a rock that naught can move!
—*Newman.*

FINDING ONE'S SELF

What an inspiration there is in discovery! The finding of a vein of ore, reaching the rise of the Congo, receiving a wireless message—what thrilling experiences! Why should there be such interest in discovery? It must be that we are made to find things. Do you not remember how delighted you were as a child to find a half-worn purse, or a broken jackknife, or anything that had really been lost? This is a universal instinct. We like to make discoveries; we are made to find things.

This is the history of civilization. The record of the race is a record of finding things, and we are still digging, climbing, and searching everywhere. "Eye hath not seen" the wonders yet ahead of the world's searchers.

But there is a greater find than all of this; it is the finding of one's self. To really make the discovery of who we are, what we are, and the riches of our resources is the greatest find beneath the

stars. What is the difference between heathen darkness, with its mere existence and its minor tones, and civilization, with its lofty music? It is the realization of who we are. The difference between paganism, with its barbarities and sensual luxuries, and Christian civilization, with its charming fruit, is the finding of the real self. Nothing is more interesting and suggestive than the story of the awakening of a nation; but the awakening of individuals precedes the awakening of nations. Moses before a burning bush wakens to the sense of a self not hitherto known; and that was a foreshadowing of a long line of men, who from time to time have come out to the realization of another life face to face with God's vision. Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul the apostle when on the Damascus road he finds his real self. The disciples of Jesus awake from an existence as common fishermen to become prophets, teachers, and leaders of men; and we, who will be all that we may, must, before we find place or power, find the truer, nobler self.

We do not find ourselves alone. It takes a great explorer, discoverer, searcher after the lost to find us, or to help us to find ourselves. This is not sentiment; this too is history. We are having poured into our ears in these days the glories of our civilization, and are constantly reminded of the greater riches than those before us enjoyed; but whence came these? They have been sought out, discovered, dugged up by One who came to seek the lost. For "the rise of man" is the rise of *man*. He comes to himself first, and his riches afterward. All this march upward has been hand in hand with Jesus Christ. Jesus not only furnished the parable of the prodigal, but he it was who brought the prodigal to himself; for this parable is actualized in the finding of Matthew, Zaccheus, and Paul, who by the help of the Christ found themselves and began the foundations of the world's moral wealth. You cannot find yourself except God help you, any more than could Moses in the desert, or Saul on the Damascus road. He only knows who

you are and where you live; he only can illumine your life to the disclosure of your real self.

The mission of Christ was to seek the lost. What a find that was when Jesus halted by the way in Samaria and opened to the poor woman not simply the book of her actual life, but went beneath it and opened the fountain of her possible life! The splendid vision of the Christ reflected in her soul the glories of a new self and a new life of faith, hope, and happiness. Jesus found men building barns and storing goods; eating, drinking, and making merry; reckoning life by days and things. He turned his searching but tender gaze upon them and they were suddenly startled into a new life; for he showed them that a man's life consisteth not in things, is measured not by "figures on a dial"; not existence, but life. "I have come that ye might have life." "Follow me." And gradually in his presence there dawns the new self, and out of that the new life that is and that is to come, even "the ageless life."

FINDING ONE'S PLACE

How narrowly we miss the road
That might our future life decide!
So many paths are vainly tried,
So many but the right one trod.

A very large part of the failures of life are caused by getting round pegs in square holes, and let no one think that we can ever make these round pegs perfectly fit the square holes. Men try, but they fail, because this is not a mechanical matter; it is a divine order of fitness. There is a place for everyone in the world and its work. "Like a boat on the river," says Emerson, "every boy runs against obstacles on every side but one; on that side all obstruction is taken away and he sweeps serenely over the deepening channel into an infinite sea."

Life's calling is a real calling; it is the appeal of a voice which, if delicately guarded, never fails to direct us in the real way of our life. "The boy is father of the man"; the whole program of human life lies very near the surface,

like an endless coil unwound. If we will but give it a chance, it is ever seeking to evolve itself in the most perfect fulfillment of that splendid program, for "what the child admired, the youth endeavored, and the man acquired." There are always so many blind guides who are seeking to lead us astray from the real path of life. The parents of Michael Angelo declared no son of theirs could follow the despised pursuit of an artist, and they punished him for covering the walls and furniture with sketches, but his passion burned its way out. Galileo, we are told, was set apart for a physician, but when forced to study anatomy and physiology would hide away and work out abstruse problems. The physician Handel wished his son to become a lawyer, and so discouraged his fondness for music; but the boy got an old spinet and practiced in the hayloft. When the doctor visited the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels he took his son along; the boy wandered, so it is said, to the organ in the chapel and soon had a private concert under full blast.

Any one of these great men might have been a failure had their gifts been directed otherwise than nature had ordered, and what would the world have missed had not these boys persisted in following the direction of that ever-present Providence that seeks to help men to find their places. Allow no other voice, however loudly it may call, to hush that clearer voice of your natural instincts.

I hear a voice you cannot hear, which says, "I must not stay."

I see a hand you cannot see, which beckons me away.

It is a great day when a boy or girl stands face to face with the world, with a clear vision and a profound feeling that they have a definite part in the world's great work. In the various callings of life to which you may devote yourselves, some of you will make a fortune, some will gain fame, but the majority will travel a common and well-beaten path side by side with the rank and file of the great army of mankind. I would not discourage you in seeking

either, for if the fortune or the fame are not made, the very seeking, if legitimately pursued, may make you. But I would urge you not to set your heart upon these, for in any of the so-called higher callings and wider spheres of human enterprise only the smallest margin ever survive; the vast majority find the common level.

But there is a high calling, a lofty mission upon which you all may enter; a royal class among whom you may have your name; a lifework worthy of your largest gifts, the results of which stretch through the eternities. It is the Christian calling, that great business about which the Man of Nazareth went forth, and in the narrow compass of three short years left behind him more results than all the otherwise famed sons of men. Into that calling he invited others, and the procession is one that reflects more glory than that of any other line since man began his march.

The Christian calling does not interfere with, but rather enriches and reinforces, every common and honorable

calling of life. It becomes the one supreme matter, which, taking precedence of all petty things, saves us from the disaster of their uncertainty. Business and professional men to-day often have side issues and minor enterprises of a secondary character which contribute not a little toward their main pursuit, but they do not bank on them; they are prospects, possibilities, ventures, all subordinate to the main issue of their life, and are never allowed to detract from it; they are uncertainties and must not be permitted to hazard greater and more secure interests.

The Christian calling does not hinder men from engaging in the minor things, but it does protect them against confidence in that which is as uncertain as a shadow, and secures to them that to which sons of God alone are entitled. This calling requires no impossibilities in previous conditions; it "takes us as we are." It took fishermen and made heroes of them, and it takes bootblacks and newsboys and sets them in the midst of glory. The Christian calling

has often proved the open door to one's real field of service. If you do not respond to that call you may miss your real lifework, travel on a lower plane, and move in an infinitely narrower sphere.

There is an order in the universe to which we are related; if we take our life out of that order, like the prodigal of old, we pervert the laws under which we live. The Christian calling puts us "en rapport with the universe." This higher life of self-realization, under the gracious awakening, molding, and directing influences of Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer, makes us so supreme that whether our earthly path lead through dark mists or up rugged steep, though we gain or lose houses or lands, one thing is certain—"that kingdom-found life ceases to be plodding."

THE GUIDING STAR

But who can count the stars of heaven,
Who sing their influence on this lower world?
—*Thomson.*

Stars have always been of special significance to the human race. Some of the most prevalent superstitions having to do with man's movements are associated with stars, and the more we learn about the stars the more confident we are that these superstitions have some ground in fact.

The writer of an exceedingly interesting article in *The Cosmopolitan* describes the delicate process by which we secure our time, and shows how dependent even this advanced age is upon the stars. At a certain moment of the night the man in the Lick Observatory, lying upon his back, looks out through the great telescope and waits for a certain star to cross a fine line made by the tiny thread of a spider web drawn across the telescope; this indicates the time, and from that indication the great

clock is set. Once every day for two minutes all business is suspended and everybody waits until the chief operator touches the key and calls "Time—time" and puts the whole Pacific Coast in time, all by a star.

The chief clocks in every great establishment are marked "U. S. Observatory Time, regulated hourly" from Washington, where the great "master clock" keeps the whole country in time and starts every shop and railway train; but this great clock has to be regulated, corrected, and guided by a distant star.

There is a great divine purpose in making the heavens so beautiful, so wonderful, and so necessary that we have to stop and look up, otherwise we should be always looking down; for we are apt to feel that we shall stumble and miss things if we do not keep our eyes to the earth. But we are quite as likely to stumble and are sure to miss things infinitely more significant by failure to keep our eyes on high. Creatures of the earth, earthy, need to keep close to the earth and trace all their ways by the

paths of the dust; but we are more than earthy, and need to trace our paths by celestial lights, for our course leads beyond where stars make their way.

We are warned on every hand in these days of the danger of being dreamers. This age rings the changes on the practical; this is important, but it is not as important as this extreme age would make it. The world needs men who can climb as well as men who can plod. Plodding is quite necessary; men must follow the plow and turn up the fertile soil; they must drive the pick and dig up the gold; but they must not forget the bright sky above them, nor the fortunes that lie over the celestial highways to which some distant star will guide them if they will look upward.

We are apt to become bowed like the man with the muckrake, who, while gathering up the rubbish at his feet, becomes so absorbed in his gaze and so stooped with his burden as to miss the angel above his head waiting to bestow a crown of glory. Beware of the muckrake; give God's guardian angels a

chance; they wait everywhere to lead you to the heights and give to you the true crown of life.

A great thought, a lofty impulse, a dream immortal that lifts our burden, by lifting us beyond where burdens weigh—these are fortunes greater than all the world can bestow upon its most persistent diggers and devoted plodders.

In the "quest for happiness" to-day we are likely to lose our way; the absence of "the simple life" affords little chance for dreams, little chance to commune with stars that lead to God. The paths of to-day lead through mazes of luxury, with snares for our feet and burdens that bow us down and narrow our vision. It was under God's starry sky, with upward gaze, the psalmist found the revelations which, given to the world, have enriched human life by their vision of its dignity more than all inventions and discoveries gained by fixing man's gaze upon things of earth. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the

stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" and that intent gaze above caused the very stars to light his vision until he saw as he had never seen before, and exclaimed, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." And on that golden ladder of vision men have climbed farther and faster than by all the golden stepping-stones digged from the mines of earth.

Twenty centuries ago the world's wise men from the East, studying, as was their custom, the movements of the planets, came upon an unusual star. That star had in it a beckoning power, corresponding to the hopes which the dreams of the years had kindled in their breasts. They followed it, and, though its leadings were strange, they followed until it halted over the Bethlehem manger and indicated to the world the greatest event of the ages. That star of the East led to Him who has been known to human hearts for twenty centuries as the Star of Bethlehem; who

has in turn guided millions of men to a higher life—a life that, though it leads over the dreary paths of earth, leads up the shining heights and pushes back the horizon of life until the horizon disappears in the boundless life.

Jesus is the unfailing Star. The artificial lights of earth, the guides of human discoveries and inventions, are not equal in certainty to the guidance of the distant star. The mariner knows one star. He may lose chart and compass, he may drift beyond all lights and signals, every modern means of knowledge of his whereabouts may fail him, but if he can fix his eye on that single star he is never lost; that star never fails.

“The star in the far heavens keeps the whole world in harmony. It is not affected by heat or cold; it loses or gains by neither; it cannot be crushed nor broken; it has no repair shop; it is affected by no human whims; it does not have to be wound up; is not disturbed by earthquake or storm.”

So the Star of Bethlehem is our unfailing Star. He keeps the whole moral

world in harmony. No temperature of earth, no stretch of space can hide his guiding light or shake his assuring hope. Storms may sweep, clouds may shadow us, sorrows may flood our eyes with tears until no other light can be seen, yet he never fails—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." He beckons us, as did the ancient star the wise men of the East, and if we will follow, the angels will wake within us the glad tidings of great joy, telling us not only of a Saviour born in Bethlehem, but of a Saviour born within our souls, bringing to us not merely the tidings, but the joy itself, "unspeakable and full of glory."

THE LIGHT THAT LIGHTETH

This life of ours begins as a sacred mystery. What does it mean? Whence did it come? Whither is it bound? All these questions lead into great labyrinths of curiosity. We are here, and before we are aware of who we are, what we are, or whither we are bound, we find ourselves pushing deep into life's vast unexplored, climbing dizzily its heaven-reaching heights.

These mysteries of life are interesting and attractive, but they are nevertheless burdensome and often depressing. Contemplate life and you wonder how we live; you are mystified by the marvelous secret of this being, held together by threads more delicate than the spider's web. Consider the weakness of a human being on the one hand, and then on the other its strength; life put out by the slightest touch of a tiny volted wire, yet again heroically, masterfully baffling the mightiest forces of God and man.

Contemplate the program of life and it is matchless, excelling all the genius of the actor. No formal production ever exaggerated the commonest experiences of common men. The world at its best does not rebel at the tragedies of Job, Paul in his seventh of Romans, nor Shakespeare's Hamlet, but the increasingly enlightened race approves the cunning of those who so skillfully portray the deepest realities of our being. What means this program of our mingled joys and sorrows; of delights too ineffable to describe, and pains too excruciating to seem possible in a divinely ordered world? What mean these loads we must bear, these mountains we must climb, these streams we must ford to carry out the common program the end of which seems so uncertain and unsatisfactory? For we shall soon have it said above our sleeping forms, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." We are "soon cut off and fly away." These are the questions you have raised and will continue to raise as maturer life crowds with its

complexities, while you involuntarily obey its marching orders. Wisdom and philosophy throw no light upon these deeper mysteries. All history and literature of the Old Testament and of paganism is a literature largely of fatalism and pessimism; the music of the heathen world is all of minor strains, and except where some great soul is lifted by heavenly vision into realms of more than human light all books are books of lamentation. Well may the poet sing concerning the coming of Jesus, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Every anniversary of the advent of Jesus Christ into this world marks the lifting of the veil a little further, the lessening of the burdens of human mystery, and the assurance of the meaning of to-day and to-morrow. We do not mean to say that Christianity relieves life of all mystery; in a certain sense it were better not, for mystery has its correspondence in the restless searching

passion of man. But there are mysteries so deep and depressing that they rob life of its charms and often fill us with nightmares of distress and despair. Upon these deeper, darker mysteries Christ casts the only "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Before Jesus came birth was a misfortune, and everyone might say, "Better for me I had never been born." Cradles were not more cheerful than tombs. But the manger of Bethlehem has transformed every cradle, and a birth into God's great, mysterious world to-day, in which shines the light of Christ, is an event full of great possibilities.

Christ casts light upon our being; he puts a new construction on men and things. With Jesus force is not so significant; position counts for little; what a man *is*, says Jesus, not what he *has*, determines his worth. Jesus shows that character swings through this world with more than giant force, held somewhat as the planets keep their place, without groove or chain. His own life illus-

trates this for us. Being, the creature, trembles helplessly before the sword of Herod and takes refuge in distant Egypt. Being stands with closed lips and bowed head in Pilate's court; the creature is swept by the violence of the conqueror down into Gethsemane's cruel garden. He lugs his own death beam up Calvary's hill and stands submissive to nails driven by men who are servants of hell; and being hangs its head and breathes its last in seeming defeat. All of this Jesus does in apparent darkness, but the ultimate outcome of these incidents reveals the power and dignity of being in the triumph of character over conditions, in such a way as to reflect everlasting light upon the deep mystery of life.

How? Because the Christ here reveals being as something more than existence. What we have seen is not the reality; it is but the mere outward form. A man's life does not go down with "the abundance of the things he possesses," for on a towering mountain the Prince of Darkness fails to sway the

hungry Man of Nazareth, who in his lonely isolation stands crowned with eternal victory over all earth's might and glory. It is repeated in Gethsemane and at Calvary; and now to us in fellowship with him dire temptations are transformed into angels of everlasting benediction; deepest sorrows add aroma to the excellency of character imbedded in the divine will; a life of service and sacrifice takes on the might that makes the cross the greatest force in the world. In fellowship with him, losing life we find it, and the tomb is the gateway to the many mansions in the Father's house of which he alone assures us; for in his companionship even the grave yields its mysteries; death is swallowed up in victory; living and believing on him, we shall never die.

Let us not wait until by the overwhelming gloom of some dark Mediterranean of life we reach for light, if haply we may find it; but now begin to walk in the light and learn to confide in Him; then when the darkness settles we can

pray, not vaguely, but with blessed assurance,

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!

CHAPTER IV
THE ROAD TO THE THRONE

If you wish to win bright laurels,
Ere to God you yield your life;
If while on through years you journey
You'd be valiant in each strife;
If you'd nobly do your duty,
Or the "still small voice" obey,
Sit not idly, thinking, dreaming,
But work earnestly to-day.

There are roads where you can travel,
There are seas where you can sail;
You can beautify the wayside,
Or with lifeboats face the gale.
You can help raise lofty temples,
To show straying souls the way
To win crowns of matchless glory,
So work earnestly to-day. —*Lucette.*

STRIVING FOR THE CROWN

A thoughtless age does not make great men. We must have time for reflection and meditation. James Martineau said, "There are three kinds of human distinction—what a man possesses, what he achieves, and what he is; or, having, doing, being." We are apt to get an idea in these days that men and women may be measured in terms of revenue, and thus, what a man *has* makes him. One has said, "To get good is animal, to do good is human, to be good is divine."

Every race has left behind it monuments of its achievements. Moses saw them in Egypt; Paul, as he stood at Mars' Hill; and the history of Rome is its tablets in memory of the great; and even America is not without this ideal and ambition. Many boys have scratched their names well up the Bunker Hill Monument, and the woodwork around the rickety stairway leading to the old North Church tower was long

since nearly cut away by those ambitious to carve their names in that sacred and historic place.

Every true man strives for a kingdom and a crown. What are our thrones? What are our crowns? Jesus gave the world its supreme lesson in discriminating between the passing and the permanent. He measured his steps and sifted all impulses and motives until the purest became supreme. There is no crown worth while unless it be that which connects us with things that abide. A man may wear a crown of gold and be helpless as Agrippa, while another in chains at his feet, "with only a worn and faded cloak," but a peerless character, has a kingly power, before which the monarch trembles.

The motive of our life and the spirit of our action determine our real dominion. How tame is the glory of a Roman conqueror beside that of a Cromwell! History always corrects the mistakes of men by weighing and measuring everything in the scales of truth and righteousness. Jesus said, "Therefore

whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man"; and history has forced us to believe that "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Jesus corrected the selfish view of the world by going to the cross. The cross is the cost of the crown. We have to let go the lesser values to seize the higher. But what is the chaff to the wheat? It is always a good bargain to exchange the numerous pearls of passing or uncertain value for the one of great price; and if we do not sift, time will sift for us, for the world passes away. In every department of life we are brought face to face with this mistake and its folly. We are every day called to look upon those who have drunk the cup of bitter defeat and are sitting in the ashes of despair. While young they did not think so; they said, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry"; but time leaves them standing on the slope of the hill crying in sore regret, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." The crown has failed; the scepter fallen, the kingdom is gone. We

have read the story of the Egyptian king who employed an architect to build him a tower. The architect covered the tower with plaster on which stood boldly the king's name. It was conspicuous, but deep into the granite he fixed his own name. As the years passed the plaster crumbled; the royal name disappeared, but the name of the architect remained. Great achievements of a temporal character may lift our names on high, but there is no assurance that they will survive. They may fade with the ages, but if the world pass away life and its work, imbedded in His will, outlive even the world.

What is the Father's will? Jesus came to reveal it. He said to men, "Follow me and I will make life worth while, for I have come not to lessen but to enrich life; I have come to give you life in its abundance." Get a part in the will of God. Do not allow the heritage of that "will" to slip from you. Nothing less than such a life as this is worth while. Place the crown of your best affections and devotions upon the

brow of Jesus, follow him where he leads, and you may be sure that one day he will return it with a crown of everlasting life.

SELF-MASTERY

Peter the Great once stood looking into the tomb of Richelieu. "Great man," said he, "great man; would give half of my kingdom to have him teach me how to rule the other half." Ancient civilization is the record, for the most part, of attempt by larger skill and power to overcome and gain dominion. "To the victors belong the spoils." Modern civilization marches to a new and entirely different note; it is the Christian note, hence with pride we call it Christian civilization.

The masters of the Western world have outstripped all other world conquerors; but their conquest has been by finding strength and resources within their own bounds, rising to independence and world-mastery by conquest of their own forces. Modern civilization does not appropriate fortunes and seize the scepters of conquered empires; it seeks to build thrones and wield scepters in its own rights. Nations are no longer

proud of being able to loot palaces, squander fortunes, and carry off kings and queens chained to their chariot wheels. They are only proud when of their own resources they can lift themselves in wealth, intelligence, and character until their overshadowing glory causes nations to wait for their leadership.

This disposition to master, when by right motive and proper spirit it exhibits itself, has never received from either human or divine judgment anything but highest commendation. But history writes in clear and unmistakable terms this sentence: All true mastery begins with self-mastery; and there is no permanent victory for anyone, however great his temporary triumph, whose conquest has not behind it the conquest of self. All other conquest is uncertain and furnishes no reliable basis of permanent triumph.

Conquest of self discloses to us fortunes we are not otherwise aware of, and gives us the independence of our own fighting forces. So many people

miss the wealth of life by seeking forces without, when these qualities are all within themselves, waiting to be mastered. "There are stops in a great organ the amateur never touches." Only a master makes them sing. To seek another organ is not mastery, but merely appropriation. Mastery is applying one's self with a determination to be able to pull out every stop and manipulate it until all the shades of effect blend into glorious music. Lyman Beecher said, "If I could play all that is in me, I could beat Paganini." It is a great thing to be conscious of the mighty forces of life suppressed within us; and the very biggest thing a soul can do is to lay hold, release, and direct those forces.

These wonderful forces for development or destruction may lift us to the highest or debase us to the lowest. A span of fiery dashing horses are a delight and fill one with exhilaration and rapture as he sits behind them, controls and directs them at his will; but once he loses control and they take the bit

in their teeth, his delight is turned to fear, for every moment his life is in jeopardy. To get possession and keep control of these dashing forces within us is the chief business of life. It takes more than human might to draw out these powers, magnify them, and yet keep the storm of their passion in control. The world is filled with pictures of those able to be masters of men and things, yet who are so helpless in control of their baser self that though masters for a time they finally go down in defeat and despair.

I shall never forget the thrill of emotion as I stood on Suspension Bridge, at Niagara, and my eyes fell for the first time upon this miracle of nature. But after a moment's glance at this wonder, grand enough to rivet the gaze of men or angels, my eyes were suddenly fixed upon a trifling object in the waters below. It was that little boat, the Maid of the Mist, with her score of passengers, making her way through maddened waters toward the falls above. As I watched her I was filled with fear.

Tossing like an egg, every moment would seem her last to survive. At last, with complete control, the captain holding her to her course with wondrous mastery, she bore herself where her passengers could stand under the very drippings of the great falls, and thence back to the dock, where she landed them all in safety. This to me was a perfect tragedy, and when it was over I breathed a sigh of relief and exclaimed, "What a mastery!" To such a mastery we are called—the mastery of self and circumstances, until, in spite of passions within and conditions without, we can gain such control and direction of those forces, supplemented by the subduing and controlling hand of our great Captain, Jesus Christ, master of wind and wave, that we can raise ourselves in dignity and stand amid tumbling thrones and falling crowns; stand amid poverty or wealth, in storm and tempest, on solid earth or in sinking ships, and, "having done all, stand."

To our little lives battling almost helplessly, often in imminent peril, Jesus

the great Master comes walking upon the troubled sea of life, reassuring our timid spirits with his "Peace, be still," and stretching forth his hand of power until "the winds and the waves obey his will." With him on board we may be more than conquerors.

WORLD-MASTERY

Life begins with a helpless babe looking up into God's big world, every force apparently against it; and it makes its way amid constant limitations. At maturity we are not relieved, for in addition to normal necessities we become possessed of persistent ambitions.

Man wants to fly when he can only creep; he is ever under an inward pressure and an outward restraint. He never looks out upon the sea, or up to the stars, without feeling he would like to blot out the one and pluck the other; and in his lonely helplessness, with no other power than his own, he often beats his pinions against the bars of this fateful cage that binds his impassioned spirit.

This is no world for egotists; such know not the greatness of the world, or their own limitations. Only the man who does not know himself has no need of God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." All others cry

out that there must be a God. "O that I knew where I might find him!" "O for a power not my own!"

We are made for mastery, not merely of self but of the world. Our every impulse is in keeping with our marching orders as given in the morning of the ages: "Go out, subdue and have dominion." The inward impulse, reinforced by the divine appeal to master the world, has moved men sometimes to victory, sometimes to defeat; but however great the lesson of defeat, however fateful seem life's surroundings, nevertheless men keep on making their attack upon all forces that stand in their way. But civilization's history is something more than a tragedy of mingled triumphs and defeats; it is a testimony to the possibility of human supremacy. Man's constant ascendancy is the story of dominion over the world. With this disposition to master, and the inspiration of triumphs reached, man has become a most restless and resistless creature. He does not care to be a slave or a servant; he resents and as-

serts his independence. We will not consent to be creatures of fate, hedged in and held down by forces against us; we have become extremely impertinent, venturing to talk back to kings who hold our lives in their hands, and to thrust our wills athwart the paths of mightiest forces, because there is ever rising up within us that sense of dignity of being that makes us feel a little measure of that "all-power" which was given to the Man of Nazareth in its fullness. Jesus Christ was the first of the sons of men able to stay in this world and yet be master over it. His feet trod its beaten paths, his hands touched its resistless forces, his eyes looked out upon its tantalizing beauty, his heart throbbed before its temptations, yet he lifted himself above it all and walked over its mountain tops, as in the wilderness, and waded through its ugly chasms, as in Gethsemane, and trampled its transient praises, compliments, and crowns beneath his feet, as on the royal way to Jerusalem; and he waits to make us conquerors with himself.

Note how this world is being conquered, who it is that is subduing and gaining dominion over it. It is in the name of the Christ that India is being subdued; in the name of the Christ Livingstone opened Africa; in the name of the Christ the islands of the sea are changed from barbarism into civilization; and it is in the name of the Christ that all empires of this world are moving up to larger dominion over great world forces.

Do you find your inner impulses pushing hard for greater heights and the voice divine calling, "Higher, higher, higher," and the great forces of the world catching the echo and throwing it back upon your throbbing soul with the supreme appeal "from victory to victory"? Do you long for some power beyond your own, some will that knows no limitations, some arm that is mighty to save you from being less than you feel you should be, or from falling crushed and trampled beneath the mighty forces ever contending for dominion? There is such an "all-power,"

such a conqueror, such a helper. To meet this very burden of your aspiring soul God hath laid help on One who is mighty to save you from servitude and lead you to mastery.

It is not long since you reached forth in the dark on some uneven byway, seized a father's hand and held it with a confidence that made you a little master. What of yourself you could not do you did triumphantly in a father's strength. Along life's uncertain ways, in its great emergencies, when the heart leaps for the mountain heights and the forces fail to respond, there is a Hand reaching to take your hand; a Hand of tenderness but of "all-power," whose devotion to you is pledged by the marks of the nails. He that was lifted to the cross and reigns from the cross seeks to lift you to the heights and make you "more than conquerors."

CHAPTER V
LIFE'S COMPANIONSHIP

Friend of sinners! Lord of Glory!
Lowly, Mighty! Brother, King!
Musing o'er thy wondrous story,
Grateful we thy praises sing:
Friend to help us, comfort, save us,
In whom power and pity blend—
Praise we must the grace, which gave us,
Jesus Christ, the sinners' Friend!

Friend who never fails nor grieves us,
Faithful, tender, constant, kind!—
Friend who at all times receives us,
Friend who came the lost to find:—
Sorrow soothing, joys enhancing,
Loving until life shall end—
Then conferring bliss entrancing,
Still, in heaven, the sinners' Friend!

—*C. Newman Hall.*

THE BEST FRIEND

Friendship—what a word! How fraught with meaning! Its worth is beyond all measure. We often use this term lightly with reference to persons who are friends only in a superficial sense, by virtue of conditions which when changed quickly break the tie. Even the splendid friendship of Samaritanlike principle is not an absolute bond. True friendship is sacred and lonely, not conditioned by circumstances nor based on principles, but born of love. This friendship is as abiding as the mountain, and as sure as the tide. It stands in the face of all assaults of doubt, and flows with an unceasing passion. The very reference to such a friend makes the heart throb, and sends a surge of emotion through the soul. Such is the friendship of Jesus, and love is the force of his friendship.

The friendship of Jesus brings out the best that is in us. Some people are kindly disposed, but cannot lay hold of

our best. We know what an influence one who loves us has upon us. Have you ever wondered how those unlettered disciples became such noble characters? The secret was their friendship with Jesus: without that fellowship the world might never have heard of them. "Is life worth living?" is a common question, but never asked by those who live in companionship with Jesus. He makes life limitless in height, depth, length, and breadth.

He is a friend not affected by our conditions. At Christmas time many of our gifts are conditioned upon what may come to us, but not so with our gifts to father and mother. We never stop to think of what we may receive in return. When we discover that our gifts are not appreciated we cease to bestow them. Not so with Jesus; he offers his pardoning love to those who disregard and abuse it.

His friendship is one of service. He yields himself completely to our needs. You can judge friends by what they will do for you, what risks they will

take. One day a letter came to me from a young man friend of mine, stranded in a distant city and financially embarrassed. He mentioned several men who had always been his friends and who had treated him kindly, but when asked to assist him in his sore need, to the extent of some risk, they were not ready. It was an easy-going friendship. But Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life in service for humanity.

His friendship is a friendship of sacrifice. A boy is arrested and thrust in jail while selling papers and blacking boots on the corner; many notice him in a most friendly way, though no one is friend enough to bail him out; but a poor mother in her penury will sell the very shoes from her feet to redeem him. Such a friend is Jesus, who died for and redeemed us sinners.

He is a friend with power. We like to make friends of folks of influence; we think we may need them sometime in our limitations, for we are sure to get to the end of our resources; then

people of influence can lift the cloud or break the fetters. In time of real mortal sorrow, when all the light of day went out, to whom did you go? To your bosom friend, and poured all your sorrow at her feet; and closeted there you found some comfort. But best friends are limited at some points. In the Bethany home Jesus leaves the record of a friend with power to comfort, and his words go beyond our dearest earthly friends when he says, "Let not your heart be troubled."

He has power to pardon. O wonderful gift which the Friend of sinners bestows! It was in the time of the great civil war that a boy had violated army rules and must pay the penalty with his life. All friends were powerless; but the mother knew there was one man who, if she could interest him in her boy, could save him. She hastened to the White House and soon had the ear of that man whose heart was ever sensitive to a mother's appeal. Pouring out her grief before him, she made Mr. Lincoln the friend of her boy.

He quickly seized a pen, hurried a messenger away, and bade the broken-hearted mother go; her boy was pardoned. So Jesus is ever the Friend of sinners. He came to set us free; he said when here, "Thy sins, though they were many, are all forgiven thee." "He ever lives above, for us to intercede." It is true, as we sing, "The best friend to have is Jesus."

OUR BURDEN-BEARER

The history of the world is mostly the history of a race looking for a burden-bearer. To this day men load their burdens upon others, and whole races have been bowed down from generation to generation with being burden-bearers. Human burdens were at first borne mostly by men enslaved for that purpose; and as the race moves on it does not dismiss its burden-bearers, but transfers its burdens from men and beasts to other forces that need no sleep and that suffer no pain.

This picture of master and slave, whether in the grosser forms of actual cruelty or of well-paid servants and workmen, indicates two things: a desire, on the one hand, to live a life of ease and indolence; and, on the other hand, that there are too many or too heavy burdens for us to bear alone. The Christian religion has no sympathy with the former. Christianity is in harmony with God's eternal laws of development,

and never lends its forces to relieve us of the burdens that make us. Therefore Jesus talks little about what we shall not do, but what we shall do. Christianity makes a bid for activity; it is a religion of doing things. The Sermon on the Mount sums up the Christian life in this: "He that heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them." There is no Utopia except by doing something. The great weakness of many of the modern agitations and schemes is that they are only dreams—nothing more. Young folks should take slowly to those who by mere theories expect to find a better world for themselves or for others, if their program consists in merely finding fault with things that are, and waiting for some one to right them; real reformers are servants of toil and sacrifice. Only they who do something for the world have the right to wear its crowns.

The call of Jesus is not, therefore, a call away from burdens, toil, and hardship; not a call to a life of indulgence and soft sentimentality; its truest songs

are not, "O to be nothing," but "Work while the day grows brighter." Christianity makes its appeal to the young because it is a sturdy, vigorous, aggressive religion. It does not spoil folks for this life. It has been a hero-making religion from the beginning, and the world's most enterprising men to-day are Christians. One can scarcely hear the words of Jesus, "Take up thy cross," "Follow me," without feeling the thrill of a great enterprise. This call into his fellowship and coöperation is in the way of the world's greatest service. Jesus put upon his disciples the biggest burden ever loaded upon any set of men great or small; and by bearing these burdens they carried future generations upon their shoulders, and went down only to lift the world into light. To-day the greatest enterprises are Christ's enterprises. The world's burdens and enterprises are trifles beside these with which Jesus to-day dignifies the life of his followers.

Burdens we are bound to have. Better have burdens worth while. Better

have them in fellowship with Him who can bear the biggest end; who calls not to toil or suffer in vain; who will never permit us after years of service and sacrifice to stand at the end of the race of life defeated, and despairing over fading treasures, our enterprises looming up before us only to tantalize our failing life, which has been lost in their pursuit. But, losing our life with Him, we find it; and we become masters of larger and more abiding domains, and crowns that never fade flash with fascination before the poorest disciple of Jesus.

Jesus Christ came not to save us from work, but to give us rest in work. It is not the burden in itself that is serious, but the fret and worry and chafing beneath that burden—a worry, a care that comes from lack of submission, harmony, and adjustment. Someone has well said, "There is not work enough in all the world to tire anybody"; but it is the lack of recognition and realization, upon our part, that this work is worth while—failure to appreciate the everlasting quality of doing the will of God.

Jesus calls us into fellowship with him, where we may learn the secret of harmony with the divine will; in his school we learn to say, "Thy will, not mine, be done." And we know that if out of Gethsemane we have to face our Calvary, and lug the cross to our apparent defeat, yet we are confident that with him we shall march to the crowning place.

"Come unto me, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." No one else has ever dared to say this to a weary, burdened world; but he makes the challenge and the world makes no denial of his claim, for men through all these ages have been finding that in fellowship with him life's burdens lost their pain by the power of his grace. Jesus will exchange for your paltry, chafing burden, not worth while, a glorious enterprise big enough for the angels. He will lift your life from the monotony of common toil to the joy of rapturous service, and in this service he will give you rest.

OUR KING

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.

It is a great day in the history of any land when a king is crowned; it is in the heart and on the lips of every child old enough to lisp the name. Even the inauguration of the President of the United States is an event that fills all the people with the impulse of a rising hope. To crown a king or inaugurate a President suggests new hopes and fortunes; they may or may not be realized.

The world has always looked for a Messiah. There is in the heart of every child the Messianic hope; even while we are in the morning years there lingers the dream of a brighter, better life. This is the meaning of Christianity. For out of the eagerness of that yearning comes the Christ. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." A King comes forth, and the angels break into song: "Glory to God in the

highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Jesus waits to be crowned, and we are to crown him. Why not? We bring our admiration, adoration, affection, our loyalty and obedience, and place them somewhere upon some one; why not crown Christ with all of these? We will worship, we will praise, we will pour our life out somewhere; why not at the feet of Jesus? Why not in the early years of virtue, of beauty, of vigor, of promise, cast our life with all its possibilities in the service of the Christ?

To crown Jesus in our lives is to usher in a reign of favors, fortunes, and possibilities such as the world with its changes cannot give, neither take away.

We never have to apologize for the recognition of the kingship of Jesus. We vote sometimes for people that we have reason to doubt, and are obliged to make apology for our alliance. We cast our lot and influence with those unworthy, and we feel ashamed of our relationship; but Jesus is worthy of all we can bestow on him. We never need

to be ashamed; devotion to him brings no reflection, but increasing glory, to our life.

And when we crown Jesus we are not to be disappointed. We put confidence in folks sometimes and they disappoint us; we are always risking when we trust men; some do not care to keep their promises, and others are unable to redeem their pledges. Not so with Christ. His reign has no disappointments. Tariffs may come and go; industries may rise or fall; wealth may flow like a river, or its fountains dry up like the spring in a parched desert; the promises of men may vanish as vapor before the sun, but Jesus reigns and all is well. All his pledges are redeemable. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," and we rest in him. It may be nightfall and dark; the famine may paralyze and the pestilence stalk abroad; sorrow may let fall its darkest mantle, but Jesus reigns and the seasons have no failures.

Jesus crowned means a reign of peace. *Peace*—what a word! We used to spend time, thought, and money for war—not

peace. All has changed; now we spend money, time, energy, to avoid war, to bring peace. Jesus has come and the world has felt the influence of the Prince of Peace. Whence comes strife? It is in us; every life is a little world with factions and forces set against each other. There is in us no supreme will, no all-subduing power. The trouble with the world is the trouble with us. War within makes war without. You know the battlefield of warring forces. You hear the thunder and see the smoke; the shocks of the mighty artillery are beyond that of any Gettysburg or Waterloo. You have been through it all. Paul took our picture, painted our portrait, when he poured out his own soul in these terms: "When I would do good, evil is present with me." O, for some dove of peace, for some constraining messenger of love, some king of kings who shall bring all these angry forces into one fine adjustment and make peace! We open the gates, enthrone the Christ. He lifts his gracious scepter over these distracting

impulses, and out of the discord there issues the world's supreme harmony. "There is therefore now no condemnation," and we know his promise is true: "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

Making Jesus our King puts us with an abiding kingdom. What a story is that of the rise and fall of empires! But this is but the history of the rise and fall of all earthly hopes of men as of nations. It was grand once to be a Jew, a Roman, grand now to be a Briton, an American; but it ought to make every young heart throb with unmeasured passion to be able to say, "I am a Christian." Ashamed of Jesus? Never

Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

CHAPTER VI
LIFE'S INVESTMENTS

Ambition, appetite, and pride—

These throng and thrall the hearts of men;
These plait the thorns, and pierce the side,
Of Him who, in our souls again,
Is spit upon and crucified.

The greed for gain, the thirst for power,
The lust that blackens while it burns.
Ah! these the whitest souls deflour!
And one, or all of these by turns,
Rob man of his divinest dower.

“WHAT'S WORTH WHILE”

Some years ago a deaconess who was assisting the writer in a missionary field of the church in one of our great cities was entertained by a very reputable and intelligent citizen who was not interested in matters religious, and not familiar with the various lines of work pursued by the Christian church. This man, who could have conversed intelligently on almost any other topic of the day, listened with more or less indifference while the young woman portrayed to him the nature of her work. When she had finished he said, “Well, is there anything in it?” As much as to say, Does it pay in dollars and cents as men of affairs would figure? Is it worth your time and energy? Can you afford to give the very best of a bright and cultivated life to such service?

This wonderful age has with its very many great advantages some corresponding disadvantages. Never were there such inducements to live as now,

and never did life possess such real value; but we are in grave danger of failure to properly qualify life's values and discriminate between "what's worth while" and what is not. "Is there anything in it?" This is the language of the market place; but in these days the language of the market place has entered everywhere, and even most sacred things are bartered over the counter of trade and set up to the highest bidder. It has become a saying that "every man has his price," meaning that he can be brought to vote, or lend his influence, even contrary to his convictions, if you only offer him enough; he may not respond at first, but push the price high enough and he will sell out. But the biggest man of America to-day has no price; push any kind of money, "tainted" or pure, before Theodore Roosevelt and see what he will do. A splendid tonic has been his example and administration to the youth of America.

But there is another sense in which every man is supposed to have his price,

namely, he and his service are worth exactly what he can get of the sordid things, for so many hours and so many days. If a man's ideals are low enough, you can measure his toil thus; but if he has vision, imagination, spiritual perception, soul throbs, he has no market price.

Get rich, young man, get rich; get rich honestly if you can, but get rich anyway. This is the unfortunate ideal with which we are likely in this commercial age to begin our career. We are not given this advice in so many words, but this is the impression that is often made upon us. Success—this is the great word; success at any price. Fortune, fame, success—these are often purchased at too great a price. Are we aware of what sacrifices we are likely to make for success? Men talk of the sacrifices that are made to serve humanity, to do good in the world, but they little think of the sacrifices men make to be selfish, to succeed. The former are paltry; they have to do with perishable substances; but the sacrifices

made to succeed are often rare and precious gifts, the imperishable goods of character. The great business of this world is not to make a living, but a life.

We are not to be ashamed nor disheartened if in the common acceptance of the term we do not succeed, for there are some things that transcend success; and, besides, failure to-day may be counted success to-morrow, for every day witnesses the crowning of men who were ignored, or despised and rejected, while, with a sublime vision, a clear conviction, and unselfish determination, they went earnestly about their task of making that grander thing than a living—an undying life. It is not what we get out of this world, the care of which loads us down, and the survival of which is uncertain, but what we put into it, that makes us. Money is not worth while to a man whose idea is appropriation, instead of investment and distribution. Life's gains, if only for self, become a burden, with no genuine satisfaction; it is the investment of our-

selves in the life of the world that makes us truly rich.

“The real art of living is to know how to give one’s life.” This brings us into possession of “what’s worth while.” “Is there anything in it?” Perhaps not in dollars and cents, perhaps not in fortunes and fame, but there is something in it better than these. Listen! “I feel old age creeping on and know I must soon die. I hope it is not wrong to say I cannot bear to leave this world with so much misery in it.” These were among the latest words of one whose life, inspired as he himself declared by Jesus Christ, had so blessed his day that the statute books of England showed that his service had benefited a population of two millions of people. Following his bier were men of greatest rank, down to the poorest of the famous Ragged School. “Rarely if ever,” says a biographer, “had there been such a company gathered in Westminster Abbey.” The service of the Earl of Shaftesbury filled all England with the fragrance of his memory, and he still lives.

We do not need any stronger assurance of the truth of Jesus's philosophy, "He that loseth his life shall save it"; "He that would be greatest, let him be servant of all." Would you know the life worth while? Learn its secret in fellowship with Him who "went about doing good," who gave his life in service for the world, but who won it with the fullness of glory, and who to all those who have followed his footsteps has made life worth living.

WATERS THAT FAIL NOT

The world is full of "vanishing illusions," and nothing is more pathetic than the disappointments that follow these. It was our fortune when a lad to have to walk two miles over a country road to school. Under the shadow of a great hill was a delightful bubbling spring; its waters were alike in winter and summer, fresh and cold on the hottest day. It was our habit never to pass that spring without stopping to drink. It had a peculiar charm about it. Years came and went, but whenever we returned home and passed that way we always stopped to drink at the old spring. One day, after some years' absence, as we approached the place I said to my brother, "I must stop and drink at the old spring." He answered, "The old spring has disappeared, dried up." We halted, and I looked, to find nothing but dry sand—not a sign of the sparkling waters; they had failed.

Near the old homestead was a charm-

ing little brook which made its way in snakelike fashion through the meadows, across the highway, and wound on into the woods. From its singing, dancing waters we had taken many a sprightly speckled trout; that brook was the resort of all would-be fishermen of that region, and a delightful, harmless resort it was. A decade had passed, and one day, while home, I determined to renew my youth and try my luck fishing in the old brook, for I remembered its deep holes and shady nooks. To my surprise, I could scarcely trace its path; its banks had pushed in until they nearly touched; the shrubbery reached across and clasped hands; its waters were shallow and sluggish, and it had ceased its merry song "as waters that fail."

How like a thousand things in life to which we become attached, upon which we build our hopes—delightful and charming while they last, but which have not qualities to meet our growing needs!

An intelligent-looking gentleman sat opposite us in the street car; a lady of

similar dignity came in and sat down beside him. Their conversation drifted along the line of people of leisure, and this remark from the man was overheard concerning cards and parties: "Well, life would be rather monotonous if it were not for those things to pass the time." A pitiable sight to find persons in such circumstances with life so absolutely barren and empty of those qualities that give abiding satisfaction! "They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

It was our duty at one time to preach once a month in one of the largest insane asylums in the country. This institution has about it the pathos of the tragedy of a living death. Walking through the grounds one would observe men and women in little groups playing childish games with an air of victory or defeat—a pathetic picture; and yet it is not sadder than that of lives with all their faculties yet chained to worthless passing things, trying to content them-

selves with trifles. Ambition for and indulgence in purely worldly things, the fixing of our affections on things less than in keeping with the true measure of our life, are but anchoring in the shifting sand, which means, sooner or later, disappointment and failure.

Said Horace Greeley, "Fame is a vapor; riches take wings; those who cheer to-day will curse to-morrow; only one thing abides—character." Nothing assures us against the world's disappointments but that imperishable, ever-refreshing well of water which, when started within our souls, springs up into everlastingness. This is the supreme thing about Christianity; the fountain is of God, but the well is within our own souls. It is our well; we do not have to go hence to draw. It delivers us from dependence upon circumstances; our treasures are within ourselves, and not in what we have imported or what we betake ourselves to.

We witness many splendid examples of this unfailing source of inspiration, satisfaction, and hope for life. I shall

never forget one noble illustration of this. A man who in early life had been exceedingly fortunate in the things of this world became commercially independent. He had all that heart could wish, and might easily have said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But he did not anchor his life to this; nor did he allow himself to become infatuated with these failing waters. He tied to something more substantial, and cultivated an appetite for pleasure that would not fail; Jesus Christ and the church got the best he had, in time, money, and talents. By and by his fortune was suddenly swept away, and he was left, all the rest of his years, to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. He had to move into a smaller home and curtail all his luxuries. The transient waters had failed, but within him was "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life"; his life continued sweet and useful, and ripened into old age as the perfect man, his light shining more and more. When we

said some words over his bier it was not sad. The day was bright, as though God had planned it in keeping with the brightness of his hope. No one disputed the crown which he knew was laid up for him. And going, he left behind the influence of a life rich in the virtues of Christian character, and the inspiration of one who is more than a conqueror.

Would you know the things that abide? Learn them in companionship with Jesus Christ, who said, "Lo, I am with you alway." Should you be fortunate in the things of this world, you will then always be bigger than these fortunes and independent of them. Should fortunes be swept away, or never greet your ambition, you can rise above all, rich in character, Christlike and unfailing.

CHAPTER VII
LIFE'S SERVICE

Is thy cruse of comfort failing?
Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine
It shall serve thee and thy brother.
Love divine will fill thy storehouse,
Or thy handful still renew;
Scanty fare for one will often
Make a royal feast for two.

For the great grow rich in giving:
All its wealth is living grain.
Seeds which mildew in the garner,
Scattered, fill with gold the plain.
Is thy burden hard and heavy?
Do thy steps drag wearily?
Help to bear thy brother's burden,
God will bear both it and thee.

—*Charles.*

“ABOUT MY FATHER’S BUSINESS”

There are occasional men whose ideal of life gets such control of them that when they give utterance to plain words the utterance is never commonplace. When Mr. Roosevelt breathes forth the key-word of his policy, “a square deal for every man,” the world is startled, stops and listens; for a common utterance has fallen from the lips of no common man, but a man of vision, purpose, and power. It is with infinitely deeper meaning that men are held in the grip of Jesus’s words, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” There is something strong and strenuous about these words. They could never have been uttered by a drone or time-server, or a listless fellow upon whom life had no grip. It is this, all the way through, that makes the program of Jesus so full of meaning. The very decisiveness of his conviction is an inspiration in itself.

To be a Christian is not to be like

Wesley, Baxter, or Paul, but to be like Jesus. The utter abandonment of himself to his ideals gave him sufficient ground for demanding that his disciples should consider his claim first. "Seek first the kingdom of God" is in keeping with that decisiveness of character which is expressed in these words: "I must be about my Father's business." Nothing can take precedence.

Religion is brought into contempt and fails in our hands because we, the followers of Jesus, lack this readiness of purpose of which he was possessed. We need to get back to Jesus and learn the meaning of life by learning the secret of his power.

What is the Father's business? We become greatly concerned and carried away with the big things of life to-day. This is an age of big things. Young people early become fascinated with the size of things with which they may be connected and the tasks they may perform. We come to have a pride for this; a small store, factory, farm, a small institution of any sort, is discounted. We

pride ourselves in our connection with great enterprises. Everywhere we seem to feel that the chief use of little things is as the stepping-stones to big things; and this is not wrong, for we live in a big world, and dominion over it is in no little measure the end of our being. The larger the enterprise, other things being equal, the more fully we are carrying out the purpose of our life.

What are the big things? Surely our Father's business must be the biggest business in the world. Once missionaries were insignificant people; missionary enterprises were small affairs, overlooked, and almost unknown by great folks; but the world is changing. To-day missionaries are most conspicuous, and missionary enterprises by far the biggest things in the world. The nations follow in their track and bow before their sway. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." This, then, is the Father's business; and surely

if it was great enough to command the best of the Infinite Father's love it is great enough to command us. There is no business in the world of such proportion; even the angels, we are told, would gladly have thus engaged themselves. To seek and to save the lost, to rescue the perishing and thus make men and women, is infinitely greater than to make money or fame; for they that win souls are wise. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

To carry out this program of Jesus, to be really engaged about the Father's business, requires such loyalty as is nowhere else demanded. "I must be about my Father's business" was the Master's urgent word. This to him was a passion, for which he could die; and his chief glory was in the pursuance of that passion. Nothing ought to more fully command us than devotion to Jesus as he was devoted to the Father. The story is told of a little standard-

bearer who, while carrying his colors in time of battle, was struck by a ball which shattered his arm, and the standard fell. Quickly he reached down and snatched it from the dirt; unable to carry it aloft, he rested it upon the ground and with his uninjured arm held it until his commander arrived, who, upon seeing the shattered arm, said, "Why did you remain here in the ranks, my boy?" "Why," said the little fellow, "this banner must never trail in the dust so long as I have one arm." Such loyalty as this to our flag would win many through our devotion to become followers of our Christ.

MENDING WHAT WE DID NOT BREAK

Rev. Charles Wagner, author of *The Simple Life*, in a chapter on "duty" says: "The rain falls on your head through a hole in the roof, or the wind blows in at a broken window. Will you wait to find the man who caused the mischief? You would certainly think that absurd. And yet such is often the practice. Children indignantly protest, 'I didn't put it there, and I shall not take it away.' And most men reason after the same fashion. It is logic. But it is not the kind of logic that makes the world move forward. On the contrary, what we must learn, and what life repeats to us daily, is that the injury done by one must be repaired by another. One tears down, another builds up; one defaces, another restores; one stirs up quarrels, another appeases them; one makes tears to flow, another wipes them away; one lives for evil-doing, another dies for right. And in the workings of this grievous law lies

salvation. This also is the logic of facts which makes the logic of theories pale."

How hard it is to convince the world of the real working principle of Christianity! not because there is lack of evidence, but because the cross is still hard to bear. It is a blessed fact which the sinful world is glad to receive, that "He was bruised for our iniquities," that "He died, the just for the unjust"; that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." We readily believe that the attractive, transforming, saving force of Christianity is in this declaration wrought out: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." We all believe that the cross is the lever by which alone this old world, throbbing with new life, swings back toward the throne of God. We believe that the leaven must be lost in the lump, if the lump is to be leavened, and that "except a man lose his life, he shall not find it." We all with one consent accept the doctrine of the cross, but with equal una-

nimity do we falter before the life of the cross; not because we shall be beheaded, burned at stakes, or tortured in dungeons; not even because we shall be slighted or scorned; not because we shall be "despised and rejected of men"; but because of a deeper meaning, a meaning more opposed to our poor, sluggish, sleeping natures, our world ambitions and aspirations, and our self-planned indulgences; because, in other words, we are not willing to give our lives away, not willing to step into the breach that sin has made, not willing "to mend what another has broken."

We as Christians are often more anxious to be happy ourselves than to secure the happiness of others; forgetting that our own truest happiness comes through ministry to others. Are we not frequently conscious of more anxiety to gratify our own pet notions, chiefly selfish, than to prefer others, and become all things to all, in an effort to save some? Is not our chief weakness, as Christians, that we lack the cheer, the joy, the power and inspiration that

comes of unselfish service? We do the things necessary, or assumed to be profitable, but do not lose our life in service for others that we may really find it.

We have not learned to multiply our life in all its noblest aspects by putting ourselves into the open gap and filling it by mending what we never broke. To mend what we have broken is to do our duty; it has its reward, but to mend what we have not broken is to make our sacrifice; it has its greater reward. It is the cross whence comes the real crown of our life. This is Christlike. The greatest evidence of Christianity is not what Christ did for us, but what he inspires us to do for others.

CHAPTER VIII
EPILOGUE

LOVE'S APPEAL

In that remarkable book descriptive of early apostolic life in the Roman empire the author cites the instance of the great apostle forsaking the city of Rome and leaving behind him the poor, persecuted followers of his Master. As he moves along the Appian Way the east grows rosy with the morning light, and its illumination brings out the vision of the widening plain, the cemeteries, towns, and columns of the temple in the distance; the road is empty, and the only break of the silence is the echo of their footfalls upon the pavement. The sun appears over the line of hills, and suddenly a strange vision strikes the apostle's eyes; it moves rapidly down toward him. He stops and says, "Dost thou not see the brightness approaching us?" His companion by his side exclaims, "What ails thee, Rabbi?" Suddenly his staff falls from his paralyzed hand; he stands in perfect silence, and his eyes are motionless.

In a moment he throws himself upon his knees, and, reaching forth, he cries, "O Christ, O Christ!" Falling on his face, he kisses, as it were, some unseen feet, and then after a long silence, amid deepest sobs, as from one broken-hearted, he lifts himself and exclaims, "Quo vadis, Domine?" None other heard the answer, but to the apostle with overwhelming force it came: "As thou art deserting my people, I am going back to Rome to be crucified the second time." The apostle lay upon the ground speechless and motionless as death; then, recovering himself, and seizing his staff with a hand trembling as one out of a Gethsemane struggle, he turns without a word toward the seven hills of the godless city, now sheltering Christ's hero disciples; and the boy by his side, as though repeating the echo, asks, "Quo vadis, Domine?" "To Rome," said the apostle, "to Rome for His sake." "The love of Christ constraineth me."

O that we, moving along the Appian Way of our easy and luxuriant life, in

the morning of this splendid Christian day, with all the glory of these Christ-purchased privileges and possibilities, whenever tempted to withdraw from his fellowship and turn our steps away from the path of his service—O that we might out of such a vision hear the Master's appeal in tones that have in them the throbs of Gethsemane and the pangs of Calvary, until we too, constrained by his love, respond with a full and fervid heart, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest!"

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

