

SPIRITUAL VALUES

WM. W. GUTH



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SPIRITUAL VALUES.

By

WILLIAM W. GUTH,
President College of
the Pacific.

*Faith is an experiment which
ends in an experience.—Inge.*

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To

My Parents

FROM WHOM I RECEIVED
MY
FIRST KNOWLEDGE
OF
SPIRITUAL VALUES

PREFACE.

THE real values of life are spiritual. Every age seems to be materialistic in tendency. But this is an indication on the surface and does not represent the deeper conditions of human striving. Each era of civilization has had its ebb and flow of spiritual endeavor. But there have always been heroic souls in every step of progress who stemmed the onrush of the materialistic. The flood-tide of faith has always returned. On this tide peoples and nations have gone forward.

So in the individual life there is the fluctuation of spiritual desire and effort. It would seem at times that individual men had a surfeit of spirituality and deliberately turned to the materialistic. But the sea of faith in the human soul does not go out forever. It returns. And on the full ocean of the spiritual man really rides.

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As each age has its great soul to bring men back and hold them to faith, so each individual has an impulse which keeps him in the stream of the eternal. In the struggles of life we are only too truly brought in touch with the materialistic. But our calmer moods recall and establish the spiritual. All men covet inward peace. In this desire they are spiritual far more than they appreciate, and if they are true to their religious instincts, they actualize spirituality even in their unconscious yearning for the good and abiding.

Because we seem to be hurried on in the tide of the materialistic it is well to emphasize strongly the presence and the importance of the spiritual. Any serious attempt to do this ought to add to the hope and constancy of human effort to realize the worthy. Young men and women, especially, should have the deeper aspects of life continually set before them. They are interested in the fundamental truths. Skepticism does not represent their real attitude

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to things eternal. They are unwilling rather than intentional doubters. They are often indifferent, it is true, to spiritual needs, but this fact is not so discouraging as it appears. They recognize that the faith of the fathers is still a living faith, and are far more ready to accept than reject this faith. They demand, however, that it be put into new forms and be interpreted in terms of to-day.

To emphasize the vital nature of the spiritual is the purpose of the following essays. Stress is placed in each essay upon the deeper and abiding aspects of life. Further than in this stress no especial consecutiveness of thought is claimed for the essays. They are published with the hope of adding to the material which helps to create and strengthen faith.

WILLIAM W. GUTH.

San José, Cal., January 21, 1912.

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I.

SEEK YE MY FACE.

“SEEK ye My face.” The Almighty wrote this invitation on every page of Scripture. With the same hand He penned the warning, “My face shall not be seen, for there shall no man see Me and live.” Here we stand before a puzzling contradiction. And we find no solution when we look away from God’s word to His act. Nature in all her moods cries to us, “Seek ye my face.” We confidently accept the invitation, and then are met with the rebuff, “My face shall not be seen.”

The sun, making all nature laugh and sing, calls out, “Come to see me.” We go to the door and knock. A defiance is hurled at us from the other side, “Go away, you can not see me, my face is too terrible for your eyes.” The stars twinkle, and each

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laughingly flaunts the challenge down, "Seek ye my face." Out into space we project ourselves, and boldly grasp at infinitude. But the stars mock us. "You may measure the distance by which we are separated from you, you may fix the time of our coming and going, you may trace our steps as we run through space, but you can never know us." The flower smiles at us and seems to be saying, "Seek ye my face." We respond; and then it coyly draws a veil over its face and says, "Thou shalt not see me." We pluck it, we hold it in our hand or under the microscope. But it defies us. "You may tear me apart and classify me, but my face you shall never see."

We turn to truth. Again we hear the cry, "Seek ye my face," and again the veil immediately covers truth. We pursue our quest, "a thousand glimpses win," but never see the whole. Oft with Pilate we are tempted to say, "What is truth?" making bold, in the impatience of our pes-

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simism, to suggest that there is no truth; that what seems to be truth and to whose call we can not shut our souls, is nothing but a mirage. And yet we seek on. The forces of nature blindfold us. Clasp hands and forming a circle, as in the play, they enclose us within and call out, "Truth is there; catch and hold it." So we cry, "Truth, where art thou?" Truth answers, "Here I am." We grope about, calling, "Where? Where?" Truth answers gayly, now in front, now at our side, now at some distance off, now in our very ears, "Here, here!" But the forces of nature laugh at our antics as we try to catch and hold truth, and free ourselves from the blindfold.

We should remain in hopeless perplexity if we insisted upon our quest. We go back, rather, to the psalmist and hear his statement further: "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; My *heart* said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." There is here no indication that the psalmist expected

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to find the face of the Lord, and no thought that he would be disappointed did he not find it. There is simply the response of the psalmist's heart to the command of his God. His life-given task is to seek, his duty obedience.

Here we have a real answer to the many questions we are continually asking. What is life? To attain to a certain end, or while living, to live? Lessing has a bold word when he says: "If Almighty God should come to me and with outstretched hands offer me in His right hand Truth as a perfected and finished whole, and in His left hand the desire after truth with the condition that I would continually be misled in my search for it, and should say to me, 'Choose thou between these two,' I should with humility fall before Him and, reaching toward His left hand, say, 'Father, give me but the desire for truth; pure truth is for Thee alone.'" On to whatever path our quest may lead us, the goal, if we are striving to live, will be

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truth. But it is not truth as such, to quote Lessing again, which any man possesses or thinks he possesses which constitutes the true worth of a man, but the conscientious pains he puts forth to get behind the truth. So it is not life which any one possesses or thinks he possesses that constitutes the true essence of joy, but the real pains one puts forth in his desire to live.

“Seek ye My face.” The heart accepts the invitation; it takes up the task of living and finds the delights and true worth of life. It is when the head comes down and says to the heart, “O you foolish little creature, struggling away at something you can never attain to,” that the heart becomes sick and faint and would give up. But there is something in the constitution of the heart that will not be baffled; instead of being routed by the head, it more often comes to the aid of the head and helps it over many a difficulty. As we often see a frail woman struggling against great odds to maintain herself and her little

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ones, lift herself up triumphantly and succeed simply because of the strength that lies at the very soul of her being, so do we find the heart breaking through all obstacles, righteously exultant, saying, "I will seek, for by seeking I shall live."

Or, to change the figure: The little tug-boat plying the harbor receives meekly the taunts of the ocean liner as it sails in from its long voyage of conquest in foreign waters. "Get out of my way, you little boat! I sail the broad ocean, I touch at distant shores, the whole world is mine. What do you know about life? Cease puffing away and trying to be pretentious." But sometimes it happens that the great hulk of fifteen or twenty thousand tons gets stranded or is thrown upon the rocks; and, if it is to be helped at all, it is by the little tug which comes alongside, throws over the rope, hitches to, and pulls it out into its element once more. So the head may say to the heart, "I sail on the broad ocean of thought, I touch at all the foreign

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shores of knowledge, you know nothing about my life, get out of my way, let me have full and free scope." But does the head never become stranded, is it never left high and dry on the rocks or in the sand until the little, faithful, plodding heart—the heart that never sails the ocean of thought, but remains at home attending to the commonplaces of life—comes and pulls it out into sailing water again?

To the heart the words, "My face shall not be seen," have no meaning; the heart simply goes on seeking and finding God. To the mind the words, "Seek ye My face," are ever puzzling, because the face seems always to be hidden. If we begin the quest for God with the heart we shall be rewarded; if we begin it with the mind God will draw a veil over His face. This is God's way. We must submit. But He has not left or ever will leave us comfortless. "Seek and ye shall find," was not a vain word of the Master. Following Him we look into the inner recesses of our

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being, and observe that the heart life is the only true life. By no means do we discard the mind. We use it, we develop it to its very highest capacity. But we do not try to divorce it from the heart. What God hath joined together we do not put asunder. We teach mind and heart to live together in happy unity, and find the essence of life not in perfect knowledge, but in worthy action.

II.

GIVING WHAT WE HAVE.

THE lame man at the Gate Beautiful asked Peter for what he did not have. Peter gave him what he had. He might have walked by, saying, "I should like to help the poor man, but I have nothing to give him." He asked himself, "How can I help this cripple?" And what he found he could give was more than what he had been asked for. Thus we walk by the gates beautiful of life and see men and women longing to enter in, but who can not because they are crippled.

Here is a man or woman with a narrow outlook upon life, lacking in high and noble aspirations, drawn along in the current of the commonplace to the maelstrom of oblivion. The life was morally or intellectually crippled from birth. It brought with it none of the rich endowments of a parentage so essential to a proper start in life.

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The home surroundings were neither inspiring nor elevating. The child grew up, walking on moral or intellectual crutches. It had never had the real freedom of its limbs.

We are not to think of such an one as particularly vicious and necessarily a candidate for the workhouse. There are many criminals who could have been saved had the hand of sympathy and love been reached out to them in time and had they been bidden to rise up and walk. We see such before us every day. They ask too often for money. Modern society is obligated as never before to hear their cry. But money is not what they so much need. They need rather to be lifted to their feet and given a chance to move on into the temple of life. The rich, red blood of their infinite and hidden capacities must be stirred in their veins and set to flowing.

Here is a young man who ought to have a college education. He has hardly had a common schooling. While he has a certain

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amount of ambition, if left to himself he will aim for something lower than for that he is capable of. His parents do not appreciate the need of his training. Even if they did they would not have the money to pay for his education. Neither have we any money to give him. And yet he is a cripple and needs our help. What we can give him is an enthusiasm for learning and culture. We can urge him to read, we can open up the stimulating fountains of literature, we can bring him to a knowledge of the great men and things of the past, of the world movements of the present and future. We can make his latent powers throb and pulsate, and in so doing enable him to stand upon his feet. He will then proceed to earn an education. Our one-candle power, all we had, perhaps, will have become a searchlight in him, sending out its white pathways over every range of darkness.

Or here is another whose sense of the great and noble in life is not developed.

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From birth the faculties of appreciation of the beautiful and good have been allowed to remain inactive. He is crippled. An essential part of his organism is shriveled up and deadened. And nobody is deeply concerned about the necessary cure. As the lame man was carried every day to the Beautiful Gate that he might ask for alms when he needed sound limbs, so this one is offered almost everything except what he needs. We, by birth and training, mayhap, have the stimulant he requires. Our ideals are high; we have traveled, perhaps, and have become acquainted with peoples and lands; we have seen the greatest works of nature and art; we have read widely, cultivating an inborn taste for the best in literature. Or we may have never been away from home and yet have developed the highest and deepest instincts of the worth of man, and acquired the ability to point others to the appreciation of their true needs, and to awaken their sense of the sublime and eternal. What

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we thus have we can give to the man of low ideals. As we touch the springs of his life the channels of his better self will become filled, an infusion of power will quicken his wasted faculties, he will be able to rise and stand upon his feet. We gave him what we had and it made him whole.

A love of flowers or birds may seem a small possession to the busy merchant or professional man. And yet if he can share his enthusiasm with another, wholly lacking in response to the delights of nature, he will open a new world for that other. There are men who have become morally and æsthetically crippled as they have pursued the hard game of life. What they need is not what they ask for—more money and power in business life—but a touch of nature, an idea of the beautiful, a sound of the sublime. Fields and flowers, paintings and statues, the voice of the singer, the combined harmony of the orchestra—these are unknown to them. The very best side of their natures is shrunken and lifeless.

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When they reach out their hands to us for greater business opportunity, larger financial gain, we do not have it to give them. What we have, however, we need not hesitate to bestow; nay, it is our duty to give. For it is a miracle working power, it will make them whole, they will stand on their feet and shout for joy, a part of their lives hitherto unknown to them will have been opened up, they are reborn.

Or we have faith in the great verities of life. Our hopes are large, our spiritual reach long. We have the faculty for believing and not the tendency to doubt. We are not bothered so much about logic when we enter the religious realm as about life. We accept everything that makes for life, even although as yet we are not able to resolve it in the crucible of thought. We see things beyond the ordinary range of sight, we hear voices not audible in the clangor of dissenting opinions. But there are others about who are weak in their faith, they can see only at short range

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and believe only what they see. They are crippled. What they lack we can supply. Not as though we should feel intellectually or spiritually superior to them and thus seek to minister to them, but by letting them share our faith and hope, imparting to them the largeness of our spiritual views, until they see that the rigor and vigor of logic is a crutch to help a lame man along, but not necessary to one who approaches life through the door of faith. They will become able to adjust their faith to reason and will not try to reason their way to faith. They will stand upon their feet and walk as the deepest needs of their intellectual and spiritual natures demand they should.

Here are a few of the ways in which we can help this world along and bring our fellow-beings into a better understanding of themselves and of the universe. What the world needs to-day is not more knowledge or more wealth or more comfort or more luxury. We are surfeited with these.

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What our brother is yearning for is sympathy and helpfulness. Not giving what we do not possess, borrowing it perhaps and going bankrupt, morally and spiritually. But giving what we have, believing in its miracle working power, and acting upon our belief.

This is the gospel of Jesus. If we profess to follow the Christ this is our gospel. It is a workable gospel. It supplies an every-day need. Every man can apply it, some more in one way, some more in another.

And we shall be called upon frequently to test our gospel when it seems more important to do something else. Peter and John were going into church. The hour for the service had arrived. Their duty surely lay in this direction rather than to help one of the numerous beggars who crowded the Gate Beautiful. He would be there after the service ended. They could help him then. But no. The teaching of Jesus made even the Church service sec-

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ondary to the helping of a fellow-man when the opportunity offered.

Or Peter might have given the man money for his physical needs. It is easy for some to help humanity with gold or silver. But this would not have been sufficient. The personal touch, the intimate sympathy, would have been lacking. The man would have had to come again and ask for more alms. To avoid this he must be helped so that he could rise and help himself. Only as Peter gave of the power which the Christ had bestowed upon him, could he help the man. Some power of this kind has been bestowed upon every one of us; we do not know to what degree until we test its strength. It is a spiritual possession, not a material; and will work a miracle where silver and gold would be ineffective.

Giving what we have and by so doing discovering powers we did not think we possessed—this is the message we learn at the Gate Beautiful.

III.

THE PERILS OF POPULARITY.

THE events of Passion Week lie before us as the events of any other period of history, and we can review them from beginning to end. It was not so in the case of Jesus' disciples as they stood on that first Palm Sunday, the center of a tremendous outburst in recognition of Jesus' Kingship. For the disciples, doubtless, the struggle and disappointment of Jesus' ministry were at an end. Now He was accepted as Israel's King; soon He would be crowned and sit on David's throne.

Not so Jesus. He understood the multitude. He knew what were the perils of this sudden popularity. If we watch Him closely as He allows the crowd to honor Him we shall see how little He was influenced by the circumstance. The events

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of His short ministry showed Him gradually but unmistakably what He must expect at the hands of His own people. And we may well believe that in the very midst of Palm Sunday He could see His Gethsemane. The shouts of "Hosanna, hail to our King," brought the echo, "We have no king but Cæsar; crucify Him! crucify Him!" The enthusiastic crowd about Him as He entered the city in triumph, indicated only the howling mob that would be about Him as He left it in disgrace. The honor bestowed upon Him as He was placed upon the King's animal and conducted along the decorated highway to the courts of the Temple brought only the picture of the *via dolorosa* and of His staggering under the weight of His own cross. The shadow of Calvary was already on the brow of Olivet, and the gloom of Good Friday cast its solemnity backward over Palm Sunday.

Jesus has the distinction as none other has of pointing the way for man. When He said, "I go to prepare a place for

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you," His words had a very practical meaning. He goes before man in the wilderness of life and blazes the way for him. If man has shown great ingenuity and deep insight and gone far along unknown ways leading his fellow-men in truth and discovery, he always finds that Jesus has been before him. His footsteps are found on every roadway of human experience, and he who runs, if he will, may read them. He could not be fooled by the mere exigency of human events. He saw deep into the meaning of things and could not be misled by any fortuitous circumstance.

The career of a man must be laid in the concrete of his own character. And character must be founded upon the deep underlying truths of nature. These are not found on the surface. Man comes to them only by discernment, and discernment is the result of closely following the distinctions between morals and conduct, between desires for things that are temporary and things that are lasting, between popularity

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with the public approval and actions which are right, whatever may be the opinion of the public.

So Jesus on Palm Sunday was not in any way taken by surprise. He had read the heart of His own people truly. They were so enmeshed in the present that they could not see the trend of events. He had already chided their leaders for being unable to read the signs of the times. Events of to-day had no significance for them in the light of to-morrow. They could not see that conduct, which was not right, could never run on lines which would converge in truth and goodness. They could not understand that a point gained to-day would be of no value to-morrow, unless the point was rightly gained and had abiding significance for the future. Especially were they absolutely unable to see that a Jewish king on Cæsar's throne would not solve their problems or lessen their burdens, but would only aggravate the desire of Rome to control them and

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bring upon them a more powerful army and a more determined intention to subjugate them. Their only safety and their peace and prosperity lie in the elevation of the King of righteousness on the throne of David, and the perpetuation of His Kingdom by lives of purity and goodness. For this they were not ready. Jesus knew the mind of the crowd and saw even in those crying so enthusiastically for Him the fickleness which would cause them to desert Him.

The popularity of Jesus on Palm Sunday, therefore, was only the forerunner of His crucifixion on the following Friday. He is marked as the Man of Sorrows even on the day of His greatest outward triumph. This very fact is another indication of how Jesus met the hard realities of life and lived the experiences which every man who gains popular applause must make. He had the keen ear to distinguish the divergent waves in the shouting. And long before the approving voices had

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ceased, He caught the faint but louder growing echoes of dissent. He would not court popularity. That was for children, not for men; especially for a man with a destiny. For the world will little note nor long remember what men do that gains them applause; it will take account only of their lasting benefit to humanity. And this the present generation can never appreciate. We are too near the facts. As we can not see the hands of the clock go round, so are we unable to discover history in the making. Only time reveals it.

The saying that no man is great until he is dead is true, because not until he has passed away can his acts be estimated calmly and without prejudice. Jesus declared the same truth when He said, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own land and among his own people." For in his own land there are too many vying with him for the supremacy, and from the plateau of the present the low peaks of rivalry hide the high summit be-

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yond. And among his own people he is too well known. His greatness is hidden by the multiplicity of little things his friends and acquaintances know about him. Emerson has said, "Heaven sometimes hedges a rare character about with ungainliness and odium, as the burr that protects the fruit." It would seem that all the great men have been buried in their day by the very familiarity of their lives which should have disclosed their greatness. We wonder why it is that Lincoln made so little impression on the leaders of his day and that his almost superhuman dealing with the problems of his time was not recognized. Doubtless a rare character must be hedged about so that the populace will not recognize his greatness and lead him to his doom by popular acclaim. History makes account of many a man who had the marks of greatness upon him, but who was spoiled for any real service to his people and time because of premature praise that was bestowed upon him.

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One of the consequences of greatness is to be misunderstood and maligned. There were those in Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday who were asking themselves, without prejudice, whether Jesus really was the leader which the prophets declared was to come. He truly was great, He had a wonderful influence over the public, none discerned truth as He did and none taught so convincingly. Yet they were in doubt as to His true greatness. They wagged their heads and were ready to look for weakness rather than strength. So men of commanding prominence to-day must meet the criticism of the public. "Yes, he is a great man; but still he is not doing anything so wonderful. See the mistakes he has made. They surely indicate a constitutional weakness." The approval of the public is as uncertain as a spring day, and may change without warning into fierce onslaught. Even those who were nearest to Jesus all through His ministry deserted Him in the end and by their

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conduct showed they had lost faith in His greatness. A big man is always more in danger of being hit than a small man; and one who is doing many things offers more chances for attack than one who is keeping his hands folded. In the incidents of Palm Sunday and Good Friday we learn the fate that must necessarily come to him who would carry the burdens of humanity and advance the cause of his fellows.

The futility of striving for popular approval, therefore, is evident. A man who is more ready to ask what will win favor than what would be right has none of the marks of leadership upon him. For a season the praise of his fellows will ring in his ears. But the noise will soon cease and in the silence which follows his name will not be heard. The term "opportunist," applied to a leader of a party or other organization, stigmatizes a man beyond recognition of his better qualities. This word first came into use in France about the year 1783 and characterized the party

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of concession, the party that would bow to public clamor, waiting for an opportunity to act in favor of the public wish. So the word means the leader who will not urge upon others his principles or beliefs unless the occasion be opportune, and hence characterizes him as one without settled principles or consistent policy, one who holds his ear to the ground to ascertain what the public in superficial clamor wants. Nature is not governed by chance, but by law. Mankind is steadied in the conflict of opinion by the leaders who rule according to principle and not opportunity. It has been well said that "modern politicians are for the most part no longer men trained from their youth in the philosophy of government, but opportunists who view politics as a field for self-advancement." Such an one will always look for popular favor; public applause will be to him the indication that he is meeting the wishes of the people; he will be unable to read the signs of the times and

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discover how soon the public will turn him down.

So there have been opportunists in literature, in education, in the Church. The reproach of authorship to-day is that men are ready to sell their talent for what they think the people want, rather than give them what they know they ought to have. We call such literature cheap and would not be disturbed by it were it not that an indiscriminating public will grab for this sort of reading matter. But we are consoled by the fact that such stuff has no abiding value and writers thereof soon sink into oblivion. Men have striven for results in education and religion when they were convinced that they were doing the best that could be done under the circumstances. And this kind of opportunism has a certain justification. But it can never take the place of the broad principles which center in truth and right, and which must always prevail because they have the future as well as the present in mind.

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He who would lead men must carry their burdens. This means the cross. Unless he is able to ride down Olivet on Palm Sunday and not be turned from duty because of popular applause, he will shrink from walking the steeps of Calvary on Friday amid the jeering crowd. To that extent he will fail. History will never say of him, "He saved others, himself he could not save." The verdict will be, "In trying to save himself he became self-centered and could not see beyond the horizon of his own interests." Jesus was never in peril on account of popularity because He never could allow Himself to regard applause as approval. He coveted neither the one nor the other, but only to do the will of Him who sent Him. He could afford, therefore, to lose His own life in saving others.

IV.

LIMITING GOD.

THE psalmist, in describing the attitude of the children of Israel toward God as they were being led from Egypt to Canaan, said, "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." They criticised unfavorably, they grumbled, they rebelled. And so this writer, with a keen insight, records his judgment, that in so acting the Israelites limited God, and thus held Him from doing all that He otherwise could have done.

As soon as our attention is called to this fact, we appreciate its importance. In the conduct of the children of Israel we recognize the conduct of mankind generally. In ourselves, as individuals, we see how we shorten the hand of God and force Him at times to throw His blessings

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at us with difficulty, rather than let Him hand them to us naturally and gently.

One of the incomprehensible features of man's nature is his unwillingness to take the best of life there is as it is offered to him freely. There is at once a certain rebellion against leadership of a higher kind, and an inability to see beyond immediate circumstances to the greater good that is to be attained in the future. Both these traits are splendidly illustrated in the conduct of the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness. They did not appreciate Moses' leadership. They rebelled against it, they tempted him, they provoked him, until finally his powers were limited. Furthermore, they could not look beyond their immediate present. They lost sight of the land—of which they had a good account—flowing with milk and honey, and murmured concerning the meat and drink with which God was daily providing them. The freedom and the prospects of the promised land were forgotten

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in the necessary hardships of the desert. Many said, "Let us go back to Egypt and the taskmasters; we were better off there."

The trouble with the Israelites was that they did not have full confidence in their God. They entertained low and circumscribed notions of His power and goodness and faithfulness. They limited Him. And this is what men have always done. We need only glance over the development of learning to see how true this is. In science and philosophy men have not been able to get along without God. However independent they have become at times, they have never been able to make mankind believe there is no God in and through and of all things. But science and philosophy, while not able to do without God, still have persisted in limiting Him. Some tell us that God's function was simply to start this world agoing, but that thereafter He had no proper office, either in or outside the world. And could these men find the fact of creation in some force outside

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of God—and some even have hopes of this—they would not have given the Creator any place whatever in His universe. Others make a hard and fast distinction between natural and supernatural, but give reality only to the natural, and hence claim that only the natural laws and movements, as we know them, can be considered by any intelligent man. The supernatural they would call miraculous, and everything which must be attributed to the miraculous they consider nonsense.

Now we are perfectly willing to let the distinction between the natural and supernatural go. It is better that it should, for all of God's movements are natural. If something seems to us to be contrary to nature, we ought neither to say that it could not have happened nor that it happened according to the supernatural. For in both cases we should be limiting God to a sphere of knowledge and power only known to us. We would confine God's knowledge in the limits of our own. To

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say, for example, that Jesus could not have healed a lame man or caused a blind man to see, because this would be contrary to nature, is simply to say that we know all the laws of nature, and that no laws of nature exist that we do not know. And yet we are discovering new laws of nature every day. And when these are discovered we do not say they never existed before. No man, however else he would limit God, has declared this. Not the man of science or philosophy, therefore, but the eternal God is the judge of what we call natural law. And when we try to limit His sphere or power, the heavens shall have us in derision, for we only shall have exhibited our own limitations.

Not only in His power do men seek to limit God, but also in His goodness and faithfulness. God is good when all is well with us. But calamity, misfortune, sickness, death, change the attitude of many towards the Father. How hard the heart may become, how harsh the word, how cyn-

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ical and pessimistic the expression and demeanor! We thus set a limit to the goodness and faithfulness of God; we declare He is not perfectly good, or He would not have done so and so; we pronounce against His constancy because this or that event did not happen as we thought it would or should. We are like the Children of Israel who did not have full faith in their God. And so out of circumstances immediately about us, out of our daily disappointments and trials, we build a barrier around us and limit God to this circumference, not realizing that His purpose is an eternal one, that His eye and mind and will comprehend all space and time and process, and that He operates only to bring man into a closer union and fellowship with Him and to bless him for evermore.

Man sets a limit to God's power and goodness, denies that He is omnipotent, doubts whether He is all-loving and constant. But God in no way is affected by this; He goes on exerting His power and

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exhibiting His goodness. There is no limit to either. He is the Eternal Source, the wise and loving Distributor of both.

And yet, while man can not limit God in His power and goodness, can not weaken the one nor lessen the other, he can limit God in His action. "Yea, they turned back and tempted God and limited the Holy One of Israel."

Man limits God because of unbelief in Him. One might deny the power of the sun, and yet the sun would in no wise be limited. But he might close up his doors and windows, shut out even the tiniest ray of light, and live in a dank and unwholesome air. So to deny the existence of God does not affect God in any way. But unbelief of this kind is the shutting of the soul's doors and windows, refusing to let God's light and air brighten and invigorate and warm the soul so that it can live and move in its appointed sphere.

We read that Jesus did not many mighty works in His own country, because of the

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unbelief of His countrymen. His power was not limited, but His ability to let it become operative in the heart and mind was weakened. Whosoever should disbelieve the fact that two and two make four would in no wise disturb the relationship of numbers. But if he undertook to act on the assumption that two and two make one or five or nothing, he would disturb his own equilibrium and could neither think rightly nor act wisely. He would limit truth so that it could have no influence upon him and would necessarily fall without the pale of truth-loving and seeking and obeying men. To disbelieve in God does not affect God. But such an attitude limits His power of manifestation.

Unbelief has a confining effect. If we question a man's honesty or candor or ability, we limit him at once. It is like tying a weight to him and then expect him to move freely. Belief in a man's honesty, on the other hand, has made even dishonest men break loose from crooked

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ways. Confidence in a man's sincerity and ability goes far to help a weak and vacillating man become strong and self-respecting. Without doing any violence to the facts whatever, we can say that believing men have always made for constructive forces, and unbelieving men for destructive. Take any great period of unbelief in the history of civilization and prove this statement. A man who has no will to believe is anarchistic in tendency. He is a promoter of disorder, whether he be operating in the world of letters or science or art or education, or whether in the home or Church or State. He does not build up, but pulls down.

A believer, on the other hand, always makes for construction. He is not to be considered as one who takes everything for granted, who never looks below the surface, who never investigates, who accepts every profane and old wives' fable. But he has a will to believe; he throws himself on the side of law and order and well-

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established tradition, and, making these assumptions, proves all things and holds fast to that which is good. His attitude of faith opens the avenues to truth and, while he will not be able to understand all things, he will be able to sense the meaning of many a mystery. He will see with the eye of faith; he will move not in the material world, which decays with each decade, but in the spiritual world, which ever grows larger as man moves forward.

One of the disciples said to Jesus, "Master, how is it that Thou wilt reveal Thyself unto us and not unto the world?" Jesus replied that His life and teaching were based on loving and believing disciples. They who believed in Him would know Him. The world which disbelieved Him could not understand Him. To the world He would forever speak in mysteries, provoking anger and scorn and ridicule. To His disciples the words which He spoke would be spirit and truth.

V.

PEACE WITHIN.

OUR life, like the ocean, is always moving. Now we are high on the waves, now dashing on the shore, now riding in storm and tempest and seeing strange specters walking on the water.

The great Master centuries ago commanded the wind and the waves to be still, and there was a great calm. But the effect of His words was not so much on the elements of air and sea as upon His disciples. They had become still. Fear and doubt had fled. Never again could they sail that lake in a storm and not hear the words, "Be still!" and find that their quivering hearts were silenced. For it was not merely to subdue the tempest that Jesus came to them, it was to reassure the disciples and strengthen their faith.

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Life is not so much a problem of subduing outward forces. It is a task of securing inner peace in the calm and poise of which all questions are to be judged and all conditions met. Not so long ago machinists thought two engines alternately running would wear longer than one engine running all the required time. But it was discovered that not the continual running of the machine made it wear out more rapidly, but the friction in the joints and bearings. So especial attention was paid to reducing friction to a minimum. Oiling and packing have become a science.

We think sometimes that if we had two bodies, one of which could rest while the other worked, we would not become so exhausted or wear out so soon, and would find the peace we covet. The man who guarantees a machine to run eight hours every day for a certain length of time does so with full knowledge of its capacity. So the All-wise Creator knew the running

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capacity of man. He made the changes of night and day for rest and work, and He appointed one day in seven for re-creation. Man was made to toil. He wears his life out unduly not because of labor, but because of friction. There are not many men who work eight hours a day, seven days in the week, and fifty-two weeks in the year. But there are many who worry eighteen. They have not learned the science of lubricating and packing the bearings and joints of their mental and muscular machinery to reduce friction to a minimum. To master this principle is as much the concern of man for the body as it is of the mechanic for a machine.

We are embarked upon the sea of life as the disciples were upon the Sea of Galilee. It was their business to be there; it is ours to be here. They had no control over wind and wave; it was their task to learn how to trim their sails and balance their boat and properly steer it so that it would neither founder on a rock nor cap-

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size in open water. This was a knowledge first of the spirit and will, and only afterward of skill and muscle. It was training the man to be thrown into the very teeth of the elements. And although tempests came which they could not foresee and which swallowed up many an inexperienced fisherman, such catastrophes did not in any sense warrant them to cease learning how to manage their boat and to sail the sea.

Neither have we control over the great currents and upheavals in the business and social world which sometimes engulf us. But there are certain rules we have learned; we know that under certain conditions the wind and the waves will act in certain ways, and our training, if it can be called such, is intended to meet these conditions and to teach us how to sail our craft in safety. It is the inward man first of all, and if he command the inner peace of composure and self-poise he will ride the harbor safely. He will know how

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to manage wind and wave, or to keep out of their clutch when they are too much for him. He will remain in the quiet harbor and let them churn and howl outside. He will not be among those who, when the skies are lowering and the lightning already flashing and the thunder rumbling, will set out upon the financial Lake of Galilee. Those who do so, invite storm and stress. They would have peace, but refuse to pay the price. If peace comes as they fly in the teeth of the wind, they will take it; otherwise not. As they churn the waves they set everybody else to rocking and rolling. As they madly rush forward to grasp a prize, they force in their wake those who would otherwise remain calm and unshaken.

This is the disease of our present life: to rush onward in spite of law or restraint. Whether it was a disease of five centuries or five decades ago need not concern us. It is a present problem we have to solve. We read of the simple life and perhaps are

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lulled into the delusion that the simple life is either possible or desirable. Not the simple life, but the peaceful life, should we strive for. When everybody nowadays must walk faster or lag behind it is idle to talk of the simple pace of our forefathers. Doubtless they thought they were whirling along rapidly enough. We have our own pace to keep, and we must learn how to keep it in peace. Mr. Huxley is said to have thrown himself into a jaunting car in Dublin and breathlessly to have commanded the coachman, "Drive fast!" The carriage began to jolt over the cobbles, and Huxley, collecting himself, said to the driver, "Do you know where you are driving?" And he replied, "I do not, sir; but I am driving fast, all right." So humanity throws itself into the jaunting car of life and gives the command, "Drive fast." But whither? By driving fast we mistake speed for progress. In speaking of the peaceful life we confound it with idleness and inactivity. But the busy life can be

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the peaceful life; it must be the peaceful life. For only thus can we be fitted to this world. We can not give up our present activities. But in pursuing them we dare not barter away our peace.

On the evening in which Christ was betrayed He said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." At the very beginning of His ministry He said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And yet, can we imagine a more busy or a more restless life than that of Jesus? Was it peace He was looking forward to in that last night as He sat with His disciples, or a sword? Was it peace He was looking forward to as He first faced His career, or conflict? Was there any time in His life when it could be said that He was peaceful and at rest? Surely not in His boyhood home at Nazareth, when they would have cast Him down the hill headlong; or on the shores of Galilee, where people could not come nigh Him for the

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press; or in Jerusalem, when He was spied upon in the temple and in the streets until He was forced to depart from the city each night and keep in hiding. And yet we sing of His life, and sing truly, that it was majestic, calm, serene. Not to outward appearances, it is true, but inwardly. To be at peace did not mean to Him to be inactive or idle or apart from the crowd or shut off from the world. His peace was the peace of the restored soul.

We are apt to think that outward conditions make the inner states of mind and heart. It is the inner state that makes the outward condition. Wealth will conduce to happiness only if the soul is abounding and rich. Power will give control and influence only if the mind and heart and will have been brought under subjection. There can be comfort and peace and rest only as these are found and manifested in the soul-life. Where the heart of man is poor, riches only throw a searchlight upon that poverty. Where the mind and the

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will of man are not under control, temporal power only discloses the weakness of the fortification that should guard the inner citadel. When outward disturbance, anxiety, apprehension, fear are manifest, there is evidence of inner unrest, of an unrestored soul.

The unrestful heart is restless in prosperity as well as in adversity; in times of calm as well as in seasons of tempest; when the birds are singing and the skies are blue as well as when they are flying to cover beaten by the first drops of the oncoming storm. But the restored heart will be at ease when the clouds thicken and the skies darken. It can see the rainbow in the rain. It feels already the warmth of the sun which will shine after the flood-gates have been closed. It hears the birds singing in spite of the thunder. It catches the sweet sound of lowing cattle resting care free under the summer shade of a wide spreading tree. Its habitual condition is joyful; so all things are joyous. Its

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every expression is peace; so the whole world is peaceful. It walks in paths of righteousness; even although the valley of the shadow is nigh, it fears no evil; conscious of no ill-will, it can sit at meat in the presence of annoying enemies; goodness and mercy follow it all the days of life, for it dwells continually in the house of the Lord.

This gift, this blessing of the restful and strong heart comes from above. He restoreth my soul. God is love, for He has placed within our grasp and under our control the only means of finding and securing peace. We are thrown out into the sea of life, but He gives us an anchor to the windward. We are cast into the turmoil of this world, but He reassures us in His still small voice. We seem to be left without a comforter and guide, but He sends us the Christ to strengthen our weakness and help us carry our load. In the power of perfect manhood He comes, but with the fullness of divinity—His heart

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without guile, His lips pure, His garments
clean—and

. . . calls us o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea.

When the tempest was raging, Jesus could sleep calmly. When the mob was howling and His judges were unmanned, He could keep still. We listen, therefore, when He confidently says, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Come unto Me." In our best moments we hear Him. He has a word for all men and for every mood. To the anxious soul He quietly suggests that there is no cause for disturbance. Peace can be found within. To the seeking mind He declares that no cause for doubt or perplexity exists, and wisely recommends a search for truth within oneself and in Him. To the saddened, the sick, the longing, the heavy, the lonesome, His encouragement is that as they come to know Him they will learn to know themselves and their life's destinies. He penetrates the heart of

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man's condition and hopes in a pronouncement at once ultimate and universal, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. In Me you will find rest unto your souls."

VI.

TRANSFIGURATION AND SLUMBER.

THE Transfiguration began while the disciples were dead in slumber. The glory of the Christ was before them, but they did not see His glory. Not until they were awake did they know of its power and beauty.

The eternal truths of God's revelation are in the world everywhere. Only as men are awake, however, and in full possession of their faculties are they able to discover these truths.

Nature itself is transfigured before men. Its glory and wonder shine about us. But it has no meaning for men who are asleep. There are those who live on high mountain passes, where the splendors of nature are spread out below them. And yet there is

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no transfiguration, because they are asleep. There are those who live in the valleys, where they can look over the fertile plains and up to the foothills and the towering heights beyond, and to sun and moon and stars which in all their seductive influence woo but do not win, because those looking are dulled to their charms. God made a world which the verdict of history declares to be beautiful and good. Wide-awake men behold its transfigurement. But only to such is this miracle shown.

Literature, music, art, have their transfiguration in the depth of the soul. There is the power that draws over the poem, the statue, the symphony, such change as to take it quite out of the sphere of the human. If men are awake, the glory of the Almighty is discovered in the human instruments which He has chosen to set forth His truths. The galleries may be full of paintings, the libraries stocked with books, the world itself tuned to the harmonies of the Infinite. But if there is no wakeful re-

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sponse on the part of man, the miracle of the transfiguration remains a mystery. The dulled heart and deafened ear and sleeping eye can not feel or hear or see. The glory of the inspiration of the Almighty, as it has changed men and made them poets, artists, musicians, has been a fact from the beginning of time. But the transfiguration has been witnessed only by men who were awake.

So, too, is there the transfiguration in lives which have striven after good deeds and loving ministration. The sainted life is transfigured, the glory of God changes the outward figure, the face glistens like the bright rays of light, and the form changes into the whiteness of snow. This, too, has been happening from the foundation of the world. Men and women have been transfigured before their fellow-beings; but only as these latter are awake can they see the glory.

There is a transfigurement in every honest effort at labor or toil. Work is

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transfigured if the work be worthy. No position in life is so humble as to escape the transfiguration of the Almighty. Men are asleep before this fact. If there can be a transfiguration in toil at all, so some think, it must be in some great labor, something that has stirred the soul and awakened the conscience of humanity, something the sound whereof has sent its echoes to the farthest shore of human life. A transfiguration of this kind, perhaps, is possible. But for the humble, unheard-of toiler who remains at his duty day by day there can be no such miracle. Yet while men are asleep the transfiguration of lowly labor goes on. As men become awake they see its glory and realize that every upright toiler is on holy ground in the presence of the Almighty.

We need not look for any mystery in this incident which is related of Jesus as He was transfigured before His disciples. They had been asleep for months, even although their eyes were opened, and they

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could not see the glory of the Father. The lesson is realistically pointed out to us on the high mountain where Jesus took His disciples apart. There was no underlying mystery or any deep secret. The miracle in the life of Jesus was an ordinary one, because the same miracle, if we will but see it, is ordinary to us in this day. The fact of transfiguration can not be disputed. We work along day by day in the material and prosaic march of our duties. Our feet are on the ground; they move heavily; often do they become mired, because we allow them to be weighted with the cares of daily life. We are so much engrossed with looking after the wants of our physical natures and physical conditions that we become unconscious of the higher side of human life. We look at the external, we think of the external. The world about us is near, sometimes painfully near. We would put our hands upon what we can feel and grasp; we would put our eyes upon what we can see and hold; we

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would walk upon the firm surface of the earth. This is our world; this is our life.

And so humankind is not in a position to behold the presence and the transfiguration of the eternal about us. We do not look within and discover the needs of the soul; nay, some would even declare that there is no soul. We do not find in the heart of nature something that is hidden from sight, something that the hand can not touch or the feet walk upon, something that goes to the very center of being. And because we are dulled to these inner susceptibilities, to these inner responses, we sleep on and do not know that the transfiguration is taking place.

A discriminating English writer has recently written on "The Spirit of America," and has pointed out the fact that nowhere else than in our country is there a more evident desire to purchase the results of culture, to expend vast sums of money to bring the singer or player, or the painting or statue, from Europe. But the

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American is striving after something that can not be bought. The soul of the poet or writer can not be acquired by material means. The borrowed culture from Europe, the result of age-long tradition and century-old cultivation, can do the dweller on this continent no more good than the statues which the Romans stole from Greece could impart the culture of the Greek to the Romans. And yet the culture of Europe may become a personal asset of every American who is awake to the glory of the Old World art and literature. Culture is not tangible, it can not be bought and transported. But it can enter the soul and the life of the individual who with awakened eyes beholds it at the place of the transfigurement.

This is not to say that the American people are wholly devoid of sensibility to the finer and deeper facts of life. It is to say, however—and this the appreciative traveler in Europe notes—that the pursuit after wealth and the reaching out

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after material influence and power have been unparalleled on these shores and men have come to believe that money is the main thing and will buy anything if only the price offered is large enough. The fallacy is apparent. A man asleep would not even know of the presence of the painting, much less appreciate its value. And even if his eyes are fully opened, but his soul slumbering, he could not respond to its call. It is this soul-slumber into which we, as a people, have fallen which prevents us from beholding the glory round about us, the glory which is the manifestation of the Almighty.

When we send our children off to school the tendency is to ask, How much better able will they be to secure to themselves financial gain than they would be otherwise? Our institutions of learning can not do their real work and fit men and women for life until this element of financial return is removed from our ideas of education. We see the result of this in every

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field of human activity. The cry goes up everywhere that our colleges are not fitting men for the actual duties of life, but only giving them the facility of getting the best of their fellows. Education means a great deal more than the getting together of knowledge and the making the hand and mind skillful. Education itself is a transfiguration. It is the soul of the Eternal manifesting itself before the souls of our youth. They must be awakened to the higher, the deeper elements of education, so that the transfiguration will be real to them and its glory manifest.

As we have already suggested, every kind of worthy laborer must be able to discover the fact of transfiguration. Toil in itself must be related to the activity of the eternal. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Only as the Father and the Son work in that ever-present desire to bring order out of chaos, clearness out of confusion, truth out of error, and right out of wrong, can this old world progress, and

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can men have the abiding conviction that this world is good and life in it worth while. Not for one single moment does the Almighty remove His hand from the wheel. Whether He is bringing out the tadpole or fashioning the lily or shaping character, His work is a transfiguration. To wake men up so that they can see their own transfiguration in toil and labor, so that they can discover the real service to man, which they by their labor can perform, is the great need of to-day. Art, music, literature must play their part in this transfiguration of labor, so that all who toil may have the scales cast from off their eyes and be brought into a seeing nearness of the Almighty.

This is the fact of the transfiguration, and if men will open their eyes they will behold it. But there is a further thought. The transfiguration is not only a fact, it is a power. It changes, and the change is always from the less to the greater, from the lower to the higher, from partial to

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complete, from error to truth, from doubt to belief. So great is its power that if men will be serious they will be awakened from their slumber. The eternal can not be present in the world without manifesting that presence through transfiguration, and the transfiguration can not continue without waking up the soul of man if that soul is controlled by sincerity of motive. We often have our dreams, our ideals, our visions; and suddenly, before we are aware of it, there is a transfiguration going on before us and we behold its glory.

“When love dawned on that world which is
my mind,
Then did the outer world wherein I went
Suffer a sudden, strange transfigurement ;
It was as if new sight were given the blind.
Then where the shore to the wide sea in-
clined
I watched with new eyes the new sun’s
ascent ;
My heart was stirred within me as I leant
And listened to a voice in every wind.”

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It was on an exceedingly high mountain that the Transfiguration took place. It can not take place down on the levels of life. We must get away from our lower natures to the higher reaches of the soul if we would behold the transfiguration. We must have high ideals, true purposes, noble desires, if the transfiguring power is to transform our lives. We must reach out to the soul of the eternal if our own souls are to be imbued with the power of the eternal. The disciples were companionship with the Master day by day until the time came when He took them up on the heights and was transfigured before them. So as we companion with goodness, with the better things of life, with the higher and nobler forces, the day will come when they will take us up to the heights of our being and become transfigured before us. We shall behold their glory.

But more than this, we can walk day by day with the Master and behold His glory. The gospel transfigured before

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sleeping men; this is the sad and awful side of the Transfiguration. The gospel transfigured before men who are fully awake; this is the significant and inspiring side of the Transfiguration. By its power men are charged with new life and led into the world to do His work.

VII.

HONEST DIFFERING.

THERE was an honest differing among the people concerning Jesus. This can not be said of the rulers and leaders of the Jews. These had already made up their minds as to Jesus' work and worth, and their opinion was not favorable to Him. But the people, the common people, who had seen and heard this Prophet from Nazareth, were divided in opinion about Him. Some were saying, "He is a good man." Others said, "Not so; but He deceiveth the people."

This fact leads us to note that in all great questions there is a difference of opinion. Not out of unanimity, but out of diversity of opinion, have peoples advanced, nations been born, art, literature, science, the crafts been fostered. Around one cen-

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tral truth surge and swell counter-currents, throwing themselves at each other at times with titanic velocity, only to be finally drawn into the main channel of the stream. The tugging and straining have opened the way for truth to sweep onward and come into its own.

Difference of opinion, to continue the figure, operates as a sluice-gate which holds in check the waters coming from widely separated sources on the mountain of life, and in due time permits this combined force to flow onward, turning the wheels that grind out and shape the finished product of thought. Let two streams of water flow down the mountain side from opposite directions, and when they meet there is a great splashing and churning and whipping about, and much froth and foam. But further down you see these streams as one flowing on peacefully, with nothing on the surface to indicate contention. The froth and the foam as well as the excitements are gone, and down deep

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beneath is a steady power that works unseen and holds in the leash the tides of trade and commerce.

When two counter-opinions flow down from the mountain height of men's minds and meet there is a clash, furious and seemingly irreconcilable, and there is also much froth and foam. But later on all this subsides, men learn to know each other, and what was conflict becomes peace, what was confusion and destruction a quiet, upbuilding power that makes for righteousness.

Take as a very pertinent illustration the warfare between science and religion. This was so fierce but a few years ago that it seemed prudent for one of our brilliant scholars to set down in two large volumes the nature of this fight. To-day he who speaks of a conflict between science and religion lives in a past age and must be likened to the Southerner in a mountain fastness who, as he grew older and needed assistance to till his small piece of land, went down, not very long ago, to Atlanta

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to buy a slave, not knowing that a war had been fought and the slaves freed. The struggle between science and religion was a civil war, a fight between brother and brother, which, if the eternal powers had not been in control, would have devastated the fairest land on which the sun of truth ever shone. Science, to change the figure, is the willing, the loving handmaid of religion, intended by the Almighty to serve, yes, and to obey religion. Heaven itself has blessed this union. And whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

Honest difference of opinion, although it means conflict, has as its ultimate result a salutary effect and develops the strong in man and nations. But much that goes for honest opinion is, as a matter of fact, not true in its essentials. It is the offspring of pride and prejudice, of stubbornness and misunderstanding. Self-deception is the commonest of all deceptions and the easiest to accomplish. And where per-

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sons are self-deceived their opinions are to be taken with a great deal of allowance.

Take the matter of prejudice, for example. Prejudice is the better half of pride. Let them start on their wedding journey and go, we will say, to Europe. They are in strange, unusual surroundings. New faces and different sounds greet them. Their eyes and their ears are open. They are intensely interested and to a certain extent charmed. What a wonderful country they are in, and what remarkable people! But soon the tendency to compare takes hold on pride. He remembers his own country, its unlimited resources, its undaunted enterprises, its snowy mountain heights of shrewdness and skill, where with cool and clear heads the greatest questions of state and trade are solved. He begins to swell with joy; his patriotic egotism knows no bounds; there is no country on earth so great, so glorious, as his own. And then the hand of prejudice softly steals through the arm of pride, and off

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they go, disapproving the temporarily adopted, and glorifying their native land.

This is not an allegory merely. It is also a stern fact, and deals with flesh and blood, men and women, as they scamper over Europe on sight-seeing tours. The most worthless of all opinions concerning foreign countries are those of persons, too often belonging to the professional class, who, having merely scoured Europe, undertake to tell all about it. These have not got over the pride and prejudice stage. It is only the experienced traveler who, not forgetting his own country, but, because of the fact that he remembers it so well, is able properly to estimate a strange land and a strange people and give both their proper desert. And he is always the true patriot, loyal to his own country.

The havoc pride and prejudice play in our common daily affairs, unfitting us completely at times for worthy judgments, needs only a suggestion to be appreciated.

So too with stubbornness and misunder-

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standing; these are not found yoked together so often as pride and prejudice. But, like many another ill-starred marriage, we find stubbornness and misunderstanding now and then joined in unholy wedlock. One of the very painful incidents of the Protestant Reformation was the dispute between Luther and Zwingli over the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Neither understood the other. Added to this was the unyielding stand taken by Luther, which made him appear so other than as his true self. History is full of such incidents: a dogged determination to hold one's ground when that ground is falsely taken. Standing in the very roadway of civilization, men have stopped for disputation, blocking the way with their arguments, making it exceedingly difficult or even impossible for those who had a right to the road to pass. The opinions of a stubborn man or a man who jumps at conclusions are usually to be taken with great care. Because the Athenians misunder-

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stood Socrates they condemned him to drink the fatal hemlock; because the Jews stubbornly resisted the gentle but persuasive power of Jesus they caused Him to be nailed to a cross.

What we believe colors our life. We have no portraits of the men who stood about Jesus, and no minute description of them. But could a discerning reader of character have before him their pictures, he would be able to point out those who said of Jesus, "He is a good man," and those who said, "Not so; but He leadeth the multitude astray." Although both classes might have been honest in their opinions, and we believe they were, yet there was something in the character of each that made them incline one way or the other. A vine in a dark cellar, with only a tiny ray of light entering in, will turn, in spite of the darkness, to the light. So will the intuition of a righteous man lead him toward the truth in spite of doubt and darkness. An artist who had lived

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all his life in a provincial town and seen only the mediocre work of ordinary artists would have certain opinions on art, and he would be honest in them. And he might take serious issue with another man who had feasted his eyes on the masterpieces, bathing his soul in their inspiring depths. Here would be an honest difference of opinion. But how other it would have been had our provincial artist also sat at the feet of the great painters.

We can become set in our own ideas and ideals, form honest opinions, and yet not know that those opinions are of very little significance. It is a travesty of art to call a man an artist who has never been in the company of the great artists, living and dead. The very name he assumes implies that he is familiar with the highest in his profession or is striving for that familiarity. It is a travesty of life to say that we are living, and yet continue to remain on the lower levels. The very term "life" implies the fullest and strongest capacity

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to reach onward and upward. One who has not companioned with Jesus, therefore, has no right to speak intimately of Him. His judgment will be superficial. Even the remark, "He is a good man," may be a hasty conclusion. If it be no more than mere assent to the opinion of others, it can carry no weight of personal experience. And no one can pass judgment on the claims or the worth of Jesus who has not come into personal touch with Him. The testimony of a man who grew old in well-doing as he closely related his life to the life and teaching of Jesus, will be quite different from that of a man who lived honestly and decently enough all his life, but who was indifferent to the higher ideals. The opinions of the latter as well as of the former can be regarded as honest, but the difference will be that between the light of a candle and the light of the sun. The one will reach a limited radius, the other will flood the world. The one will be a wick, which, to burn, must be lighted.

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The other will be the perpetual source of all light.

Some said, "He is a good man;" others said, "Not so; but He leadeth the multitude astray." Suppose these men had gone direct to Jesus and become acquainted with Him; suppose they had laid aside their Jewish pride of a kingly ancestry that had ruled on the throne of David; their Jerusalem prejudice against Nazareth and all that came out of it; their stubbornness to accept any one as the desired Savior unless He came in regal splendor and warlike pomp, and, therefore, their mistaken attitude of the real person and mission of Jesus, and had sat at His feet and learned of Him,—would their opinions about Him have differed? He who could speak but a few words to Nicodemus, the master in Israel, and send him away with such burning thoughts that his soul was afterward warmed into pure and clear affection and devotion toward Him; who could speak to the rich young ruler and

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send him away with true insight into life's real duties and obligations; who could answer the lawyers so truly that they must admit the supremacy of His wisdom, and the doctors so shrewdly that none dare ask Him any more questions; who spoke so tenderly, so persuasively, that the officers who were sent to take Him returned empty-handed and with the one justification of the failure of their mission, "Never man spake as this Man;" who could say to the unfortunate woman, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more;" who could say to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee; take up thy bed and walk;" who looked upon the people following Him as sheep without a shepherd and said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and upon Jerusalem and the men who were plotting against Him, saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her

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wings, but ye would not;" yes, He who could say, with crimson perspiration coursing down His brow, "Father, not My will, but Thine be done;" who could stand silent when He was insulted and spit upon and spitefully accused; who even in death's agony remembered to groan out the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"—could He not have spoken a conclusive word to those who were doubtful concerning His character?

This picture of men passing their judgments upon Jesus is the picture of Jesus standing in the arena of the world's thought. All minds come to Him. We can say that the opinions of the serious are honest. But we would look beyond the scene of this picture to another and see the company broken up, each going the way of his choosing. Some of them are minded to follow Jesus, as the two disciples did, and ask Him, "Where dwellest Thou?" And He says, "Come and see!" They who leave off discussing about Jesus and go

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to live with Him are alone entitled to pass judgment on Him. And they will place Him not only in the class of "good men," but in the uniqueness of the One Good Man, construing at its full face value the remark of Jesus Himself, "None is good, save One, that is God."

VIII.

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ZACCHÆUS, we read was a man of small stature trying to see Jesus. The incident is an interesting one. As we study it, we are led to conclude that he was prevented from seeing Jesus not so much because of a physical smallness of stature, but because of a lowness of spiritual reach.

Here was a man prominent both on account of his riches and of his position. He was the tax commissioner of Jericho, and would not have been seen pushing in the street crowd to see Jesus. Had he really wanted to come near, the crowd would not have been an obstacle. He surely was as strong as the woman sick for many years, who pushed through as great a crowd of men as ever thronged the Master. Then, too, had he merely wanted to see Jesus, he could have secured a place in one of the

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windows or on a housetop, where he could have seen Jesus with ease and clearness.

But he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree. This seems a most unusual proceeding for a rich man and the chief of the tax-gatherers, until we note what kind of a tree he climbed. It was a sycamore tree, the tree of low, thick, spreading branches and broad leaves; the tree which has always been noted in the Orient for its dense foliage and heavy shade. In this tree Zacchæus hoped to screen himself from Jesus. He counted on the excitement down in the road, with all eyes centered on Jesus, to keep the eyes of any from turning upon him. He wanted to see Jesus, but he did not want to be seen. He did not dare to trust himself to the gaze of the Master. For had he not heard about Matthew, Matthew the publican, whom Jesus saw and called to be one of His disciples? Might Jesus not also call Zacchæus? And could he withstand the call? Or, even if Jesus did not call him, might He not say

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to him what He said to the rich young ruler, "One thing thou lackest; sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow Me?" Zacchæus was not ready to do that, even to be saved. He did not want to have any of these embarrassing things said to him. Yet he wanted to see Jesus. There was something peculiarly attractive in this Man, whose fame had gone all abroad.

Here is a type of man we find everywhere. How many are there who are sufficiently interested in Jesus to put themselves to some inconvenience to see Him, and yet who do not wish to be seen by Him! They are men of small stature spiritually. They are neither large enough to look at Jesus from the level, nor strong enough to secure a position near Him and maintain it, in spite of all forces that would draw them away.

Here are the men of business. Many of these are immensely wealthy or control great resources of wealth; all of them are

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striving after this world's goods. Few ever reach the point where they conclude they have a sufficiency. Now, the principles of the Sermon on the Mount are as well known to them as was Jesus to Zachæus. And a great interest attaches to this teaching. It is surprising how numerous are the books and magazine articles and popular lectures on subjects which deal directly with the message Jesus delivered. A journalist who reads some fifty newspapers every day says the amount of space, both in editorials and contributed matter, devoted to subjects that deal with ethics and higher moral standards is remarkably large. And the inspiration of these articles is had from the teaching of Jesus. He is the dominant force in the higher life of to-day. An intense interest is manifested in Him. Men want to see Him, who He is. But they are afraid to come direct to Him. They know Him well enough to feel His magnetic power. But they do not want to be drawn too close to Him. He

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may ask them some embarrassing questions. Or His very silence as He looks upon them may be vocal with reproach.

So their interest in Jesus is that of the passive onlooker. It is the interest that would ask for information, but which would balk at acting upon it if any disagreeable demands were made.

There are rich men in every community who fall short of their possible usefulness simply because they will not interest themselves in Jesus actively. There are business men who only half-heartedly support the institutions for righteousness because they can not cut loose from the current of business practices. They are afraid of the teaching of Jesus. They know its gripping power. They are candid men and honest, the men often who most truly represent the community. They appreciate the straight-forward, unrelenting characterization of right and wrong as it fell from Jesus' lips. They know only too well that, did they let Jesus' teaching really

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take hold on their lives, it would mean a readjustment of their practices. They are controlled by the current business standards and methods. They must bow before the fetish of competition. "Business is business." "Let him get who can, and keep who is able." We recognize to the fullest extent the difficulties which beset the business man in this terrible tug and strain of competition. And we also recognize that the standards are higher to-day than yesterday, and that to-morrow is golden with the hope of a still higher standard. But in the present there is entirely too much hiding from Jesus. The desire for commercial and financial gain is deeper and more controlling than any other. Men seemingly must overreach their competitors or those from whom they draw their income. They can not do this and at the same time subscribe to Jesus' creed of honesty and square dealing. So they climb up into their sycamore trees to be mere onlookers while Jesus passes.

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There is another class which sets itself up against the evils which come through an inordinate desire to amass wealth and the evils which come from ignorance and poverty among the masses. There are social workers, for example, who set themselves in earnest toward the amelioration of evil and unfavorable conditions. But they lay emphasis upon character rather than religion. Now, we are not in favor of proselyting and evangelizing among the masses as the sole end of their betterment. A piece of bread and butter is worth infinitely more to a poor and helpless man than a whole bundle of tracts; and to put a man on his feet and enable him to work with his hands and his head is worth infinitely more than merely to preach to him the saving power of the gospel. And yet, if there is to be any character, the soil of religion must be tilled and sown. And it were idle for us to argue that the teaching of Jesus is the best seed for religious growth. This fact is generally admitted, but not in an

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open and direct way. Rather do we find much of the work which is done in the name of Jesus credited to some other influence. Scant acknowledgment is given to His principles. It would seem at times that some of the leaders in this work would take their lessons from the Man of Nazareth as He passes by, but not let others know they have even seen Him.

So, too, with many of the lectures on culture and the humanities. We find the rule of conduct they lay down drawn from the very heart of Jesus' words. We have read treatises on ethics and morals in which the name of Jesus is not mentioned, and no recognition whatever of His stupendous force in the progress of civilization. And yet there are passages in the books so like the teaching of Jesus that their authors would be guilty of plagiarism if it were possible to plagiarize Jesus' words. These men would consider it poor taste to acknowledge frankly their indebtedness. For there are some de-

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mands Jesus would make upon them which would modify their teaching or even take away the seeming originality thereof. What a work there remains to be done by these very men in recognizing the Master! They could speak with authority equal to that of the Church.

They could help powerfully, did they come down out of their sycamore trees, to give the Church of Christ the influence it ought to have to-day in meeting the great problems that are before it.

Then there is another class of small persons spiritually who would look at Jesus from concealment. They are in the Church itself. They saw Jesus face to face, and began to walk with Him; yes, who even now are ranked among His followers. They know Him only too well and are familiar with what He asks of them. They come under the Savior's exclamation, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say unto you?" They want to see Jesus, but they dare not come out

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into the open. They are God's people in God's Church. They hide themselves, however, when Jesus passes by.

A Church, like everything else, in order to exist, needs support. Yet there is no institution less heartily supported by its adherents than the Christian Church. There are men and women in large numbers who want the benefits of Church affiliations, but who refrain from identifying themselves actively with the work or from assuming responsibility. If there were no other reason for the Church's existence, there is one that is all-sufficient. That is the fellowship it offers. We need friends, and we need fellowship. One of our most eminent psychologists has said that definite ethical instruction is quite unimportant as compared with the subtle influence of another personality at the critical moment. The atmosphere of this influence is generated in every meeting of people, whether social, political, business, or religious. But it is the business of the Church to create such

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an atmosphere. And it meets all its demands. Where a number of men and women are banded together for no other purpose but spiritual uplift, a fellowship results which is inestimable in its influences. And when we say this we are not unmindful of the fact that the Church is not a perfect institution and that every communicant has not attained to fullness of true manhood.

The Church as such needs to be supported morally as well as financially. But too often do we find avenues in our Churches lined on both sides with sycamore trees in which sit many a Zacchæus in his cool shade, looking down upon the hot and dusty road and on Jesus and His few laboring disciples. The place where every member of the Church needs to be is not on some vantage point, looking on, but down in the road, however hot and dusty it may be, toiling with Jesus as He mounts the steeps to Jerusalem.

Jesus saw Zacchæus. Whether His at-

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tention was called to him by another or whether His eye penetrated the foliage, is immaterial. Jesus saw him, for it is as impossible to hide anything from Jesus as to veil the sun. This has ever been the power of the gospel. It finds people even when they are hiding from it. The psalmist sensed this ever-present Spirit of God and phrased it in words which shall never be forgotten. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand hold me." The gospel spirit is in the heights above and the depths beneath and at the utmost reach of the horizon. The winds are not swift enough to outrun its messengers, nor the darkness black enough to hide its light.

Zacchæus was as open before Jesus' gaze as though he had been standing near.

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There is no shade behind which we can hide to-day from the Nazarene Peasant. He has been the most potent heart-searching factor in the world for the last eighteen hundred years. We deceive ourselves greatly if we think we can be mere passive onlookers as He passes by. He sees us and calls us just as He saw and called Zacchæus. The only question is whether we will respond to His call. Zacchæus might have remained in the tree, or, letting himself down, might have slunk away. But a change came over him as Jesus approached. And when Jesus called he made haste and came down and received Him joyfully. "I have need of you, Zacchæus," Jesus said; "you can be of great service to Me. I must spend the night with you." From a passive onlooker, Zacchæus, by the manhood in him which Jesus could touch, became an active adherent. More than this. That day salvation came to his soul. For he took Jesus into his home.

IX.

IN SIGHT OF THE PROMISED LAND.

A WOMAN of discernment said, "I never want to teach the lesson of Moses barred out of the promised land. It seems so unfair. The Children of Israel were everlastingly dissatisfied with him, and he did the very best he could with them. Yet they were allowed to cross over, and he was forced to remain behind."

The words spoken to Moses do seem to be a very harsh judgment. After all his toils and struggles, his hopes and disappointments, forty long years of anxiety and anticipation, right in sight of his journey's end, Jehovah tells him he shall see the Promised Land, but may not enter into it. Why Moses should not reap the fruit of his toil is hard for us to understand. The

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judgment upon him, however, is the judgment of life upon humankind.

Let us note that Moses was not only a great man, he was a good man. He was the only available man God had to lead the Israelites out of the slavery of Egypt into the mastery of Palestine. We are told, nevertheless, that he was debarred from entering in because in moments of weakness he trespassed against God. The weak spots in Moses' life were to count more against him than all his strength was to count for him. There is a trite saying that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. It would appear to be a most unwarranted conclusion to say that one weak tendency in man or one single failure at a time when much depended thereon was to be the indicator of his real strength and usefulness. But this is the law we have before us in the incident of Moses. It is a law that should cause us to ponder deeply.

If we look into the world we see men by the score who came to the very borders of

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the promised land, but were hindered from entering in. Men of good parts, men of much promise in youth or even in middle age, men who seem even now to be carrying the real work of the world, have failed of their journey's end. By mathematical computation our engineers can tell us how strong a beam or a girder must be to bear a certain weight. Those who do business in the tall building or who ride on trains over the deep chasm can do so with absolute safety. They know the strength of the building or bridge is sufficient to carry the weight laid upon it. We have no such means of computing the strength of a human being. While we can make approximations, we can come to no exact figures. How much physical, mental, moral, or even spiritual strain individual men can bear is an unknown quantity.

Worse than this, there is a tendency on the part of human nature to resist any actual computation in this regard. The young man will not listen very attentively

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when problems of physical strain are placed before him. He is living in the present; he has the assurance that his strength is sufficient for his needs. Or, if he has indications that this is not the case, he is inclined to be indifferent, and will not listen to admonition. He is perfectly ready to run his train of life over a physical bridge not strong enough to support it. Many a young man, therefore, comes to the very verge of the promised land of life and is told he can not enter in.

The task of parents and teachers to enlist youth in the arithmetic of physical strain is a fearful one. Young men and women do not seem to care whether they make their life-calculations accurately. It seems to matter little how much information we have on the subject or how carefully our physicians are able to point out the source of future weakness. Knowledge of this sort does not represent a present quantity. The element of chance enters in to such an extent as to lead many a youth

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to feel that he may be able to override the law of nature and win out in the end. The future is too far ahead, and years, as one looks forward, will pass too slowly to induce young manhood to guard against the weakening effects which the ordinary strain and toil of life bring. And so there are middle-aged and older men who hover around the border of the promised land and who have heard unmistakably the verdict that they may not enter in, because they trespassed against the law of physical endurance.

So in the realm of mental activity. He who sins against mental strength will be debarred from entering the promised land. Some of the saddest wrecks that human life makes are the wrecks of the broken mind, of the intellect that can not carry the day's strain and toil. Even where there is no complete breakdown of mental tissue, and man is able to think on the great problems before him, there is the inability for hard, sustained, penetrative thought. The

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mind can not go the full length; it can not cross over into the promised land; it must stand aside and see others marching on. The confusion of voices we have in political, educational, ecclesiastical, and business life to-day, as always, arises from the inability of men to think themselves through to a satisfying conclusion. There is a babel of sounds, but few distinct voices. The race is not trained to think; it is too slow a process. We would get on. We jump at conclusions, and when we arrive at the border of the promised land we are halted, and may not cross over, for our mental mechanism is not adequate for the burden over yonder.

The law of overstrain which brings to us the gravest concern is that in the moral and spiritual realm. Here we are absolutely unable to make any satisfactory calculations as to how strong the moral and spiritual foundations of man must be in order to carry the full weight of the strain which will be placed upon them. There are moral

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wrecks, of course, and spiritual wrecks, men and women who are dropped behind in the wilderness and who never come even within sight of the promised land. These cases are as sad as they seem to be hopeless. For the train of humanity marches on, counting them out of the race.

Even the larger portion of those who come to the very border of the promised land have not trained the susceptibilities of the soul and, therefore, have no eyes that look inward to the deeper meanings in man and nature. We are told that all men are born color-blind, that even he who is most susceptible to the shades and harmonies of color can not see one quarter of the colors which are known to exist in nature. Color-sight must be cultivated just as all things in life worth while. He who would catch the tints of nature must go the whole way of preparatory training. So, too, must the æsthetic, the moral, the religious sense be cultivated. And not only is it sufficient to have these senses under culture; it is nec-

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essary to keep them quick and responsive. We know that men who in early life have had susceptibilities for the finer capacities have permitted these to fall into decay because of disuse, and the harmonious strain of music or the beauty in form and color have no meaning to them. They come to the promised land of life and are not able to enter in. The sadness that results in such cases is shown by the lines noted men have written. When they listened to music they could catch no thrill; when they read poetry they felt no throb; when they looked at the painting they had no inspiration. 'Thou shalt not enter in,' is the word they heard. And it comes in the gloom and desolation which can neither be penetrated nor dispelled.

Or men have allowed the cares of the world to press upon them to crowd out the better self, to deaden the instinct which makes for religion and spirituality. They come in their journey where they are unable to enter with any feeling of satisfac-

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tion into the great religious problems or spiritual solaces. They are not at home; they do not belong in these realms; seemingly they get along fairly well and can hold themselves on the other side of the border with satisfaction and equanimity. Nevertheless there is something lacking. The way in which men to-day look for substitutes for the simple religion of Jesus Christ, the way in which they will grasp at every wind of strange doctrine that blows, the way in which they will submit themselves to religious theories that have no foundation in fact, indicate only too unmistakably the presence of spiritual unrest and discontent.

Man belongs in the promised land of religion and spiritual truth; it is the purpose of Almighty God to lead him from the bondage of Egypt into the freedom of Palestine. He will bring him the long way through vicissitudes and experiences, all of which will make him strong. But in the lives of too many men there are the waters

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of Meribah or the wilderness of Zin which lead them from the way and cause them to relinquish their grasp upon the verities. So they come to the borders of the promised land and hear the word that they can not enter in. Spiritual truth has its law as well as natural truth. We are just as much under spiritual gravity as we are under natural gravity. And we are made to realize this fact by the inexorable ongoing of God's will. He gives us intelligence to choose rightly, and we are the makers of our own destiny. What a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

This judgment on Moses was harsh, but it is no harsher than the judgment of life generally. We can account for the judgment only as we recognize and submit ourselves unto law and order. If this world of ours, according to the dictum of the scientist, for one moment should deviate from the regularity of its ongoing, it would shrivel up like an empty snake-skin. We have the same pronouncement in Holy

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Writ. God can not deviate from His law or order, for He is Law and Order. While we do not know His ways and do not understand how He can temper justice with mercy, as we know He does, we dare not take chances on life. We are going through the wilderness under His guidance. We must accept this guidance as sure and kind. Ours is not to question, but to follow.

X.

ROUND-ABOUT WAYS OF GOD.

FROM Egypt to Palestine is a march of about five days. It took the Israelites forty years to make the journey. God led them by the round-about way. The near way was through the land of the Philistines, a hardy and warlike people. The Israelites were not trained to fight. They were passing from a period of slavery to a land they were to conquer. They had no idea as yet what it meant to govern. Hence the forty years of training and God's round-about way.

The experience of the Children of Israel is our own. The ways are before us. They seem short. So far as we know they are easy and delightful. But God says, "You must follow the round-about way." Paul would have gone to Rome much earlier in his experience. He felt confident he could

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render a service there. But twice we read the Spirit restrained him from going. We study his career and discover he was not nearly so strong as he thought he was; had he come to Rome immediately, it must have been by way of the Philistines, and he might have been overcome. Then, too, he was not trained for his work. He needed the experience which he went through to educate him for his great tasks. Although God's round-about way led him through misunderstanding and persecution, it gave him the routine he needed as a student of Christ's gospel. When he finally reached Rome it was as a graduate in the school of Christ.

So we make experience. We ask ourselves frequently, "Why is it necessary for us to come to strength and knowledge only by the long, round-about way?" We ask these questions as grown-up people. When we look at the child we are reminded of our own infancy and of our weakness and ignorance, and we do not wonder it was

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necessary for us to come by slow stages of growth into the strength and knowledge of maturity. But as the great questions crowd about us, as we are dealing with the problems of life, we ask why we can not make more progress into strength and enlightenment. It matters not whether these problems go to the very heart of the universe and deal with the grave concerns of eternity and destiny, or whether they are the more practical problems of success and failure in our life's work. Whatever they are, we are impatient of the slow progress we make. The young man as he enters college looks forward to his course with all the eagerness and buoyancy of his youthful enthusiasm. He is apt to fret and to chafe under the routine and the necessary stages of his work. Why can he not take more hours than are allotted him? Why must the course be so long? But when the end comes he looks backward with the experience he gained while prosecuting his studies. The years' wandering in the wil-

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derness, as it were, seems a very brief period, and the training for his life's work all too short.

Why does not God unveil His face? Why has He said, "No one shall see My face and live?" Why does He hold His secrets and mysteries so close within His own grasp? The way to the promised land of divine knowledge ought to be near if God is good. If He is mindful of the interests of His children, why does He not lead them straight to it? This was the thought of the early Israelites, who, as we are told, concluded to go the near way to God. They would build a tower which would reach into the very heavens. They would project themselves into the very presence of the Almighty. They would learn His secrets. They would bring them down to earth. Up the steps of this tower mankind would freely pass, and all that was known in heaven would likewise be known upon the earth. But God said: "Not so. This is the way through the land

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of the Philistines; you are not strong enough as yet to bear the knowledge which the Almighty reserves for you. If you should peer into the heavens and look upon His face you would be undone, and you could never reach the mind of the Infinite." So God tumbled over the stones of the tower and took the people and led them by the round-about way through His school of life.

The Old Testament is a history of this education. From the heathen ideas of polytheism to the Hebrew idea of the one God, who in love and mercy visited His people and who did not demand their physical sacrifices and oblations, was a long step. We read the steps in the great literature of the prophets. God led them on through this way of the wilderness because they needed to be educated. And so, too, in the Old Testament we have that intense longing for deliverance through the Messiah who was to come. Job's cry, "Oh, that one might plead for man with God,

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as a son of man pleadeth for his neighbor," was the sob of every earnest and devout Israelite. What grief, what anxiety, what darkening of hope and trust there were as the Children of Israel reached out for the salvation they knew must come! Yet God led them in this regard by round-about stages. Not until the fullness of time was come did He send forth the Redeemer of the world. Thus God reveals Himself. He takes His children the long way round, and in the experience they make there they grow strong in mental and spiritual strength.

Man is not always willing to accept this fact. He would go the near way. Here, for example, is a class of people whom we might call the easy-going class. They lay the great problems of life and destiny upon the shelf. They will not concern themselves about them. If there is a God in heaven, and He is good, He will take care of them. There is no need for them to be concerned about their welfare. If there

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is no God in heaven, but if we are in the grasp of a blindly working mechanism, from which we can not free ourselves, then we shall come to our sure doom, and there is no escape from our fate. Let us drink, therefore, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. These easy-going people see only the near way into life. It is the life of least resistance; it is the life of immediate pleasure; it is the life of present gain; it is the life to be lived in every detail here and now,—the life that leads to the promised land of existence. They do not see the Philistines along the way, or, if they do, do not realize how weak they are to cope with them.

Or here are those who see only evil in the world. They hear the song of the lark, it is true, but the hiss of the adder sounds in their ear. They pluck the wild rose, but their pleasure is destroyed because they find the poison ivy growing near. They till their fields to sow the grain, but they do it discontentedly, because they

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know that the witch-grass or other weed will grow in strength and plenty. They prune their trees and spray them, but only with the thought that the scale or thrip will destroy the crop. They do not hear God's voice in the gently falling rain, but in the rolling thunder. They do not see God's hand in the warming ray of the sun, but in the flash of the lightning. God's presence is not discovered in the sprouting of the grass or the dawn of each new day, but in the earthquake or the volcano or the tidal wave. God is present somewhere, doubtless, but He is a great cosmic force removed by infinite stages from the life of the individual. He is bringing a world to perfection, He is training a people for ultimate good and happiness. In the process there will be great cataclysms of nature. The deeps of the ocean will be stirred and the peaks of the mountains will tremble and human beings unnumbered will go to their death. Man as an individual will be only an incident in the ongoing stream of

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life. If he has discovered anything good, if he has developed a mind that is able to grasp and fix great truths, if he has left a song or a painting or a statue which appeals to posterity, if he has been the leading spirit in a body politic or a religious order or an educational system, his achievements will simply be added to the sum total of the good that man accomplishes as he lives his life and does his work. But he himself will pass out into the night. He was only a spark which was fanned by environment and conditions into a bright light, but which was extinguished again by the very same forces of environment and condition. So the pessimist or the stoic is abroad in the land. He would go the near way. He can not see the reason or the purpose of the round-about way, and before he knows it, comes in conflict with the Philistines and goes down to defeat.

Or there are those who look upon life only as beautiful and good. This is their near way to the promised land. There are

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jarring discords, there are black clouds, there are grave apprehensions. But they would drown the discords in pleasant music, they would draw rainbows over the clouds, they would quiet themselves by false hopes in spite of their fears. Sin is non-existent; evil is good gone wrong or not yet able to adjust itself to the higher life; pain is only an imagination; sickness, a delusion. Like the Hindu of old, they would draw the robe of forgetfulness about them and lose themselves in an imaginary world. But this is the way of Philistia. It is not God's way. The hard, obstinate facts of sin and sickness, of misery and woe, are before us, and in order to understand them we have to wander through the wilderness. We must make the experience of the Children of Israel. We will be rebellious, we will be impatient, we will be obstinate; but under God's hand we must continue.

The problem becomes a personal one. We all go through a bondage in Egypt; a

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slavery of some kind attaches to us. God can and does lead us out of this Egypt. He can do it in a night, as He led out the Children of Israel. But it is an entirely different matter for Him to take us to Palestine. The Egypt inheres in our blood, it flows through our veins, and it is as important for the Almighty to get Egypt out of us as it is to get us into Palestine. The long, round-about way is necessary. If we were strong enough to go through the land of Philistia we would immediately think too highly of ourselves. The feelings of independence would stir in our veins; we would have no need for the Almighty; nay, we would even ignore Him, or declare Him to be non-existent.

We must go the longer way. Here we shall meet our foes gradually and have a fighting chance against them. We must be led even to the very point of despair, where water and food fail us, in order to see that God can and will provide. We must be placed before inscrutable mystery

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in order to see that the mind of man is not sufficient unto itself, but dependent upon God. By constant disappointment in the wilderness we must learn that stability and sufficiency in daily life are the result of gradual, painstaking, invigorating growth, and that the road to ease and plenty is the round-about way. When we come face to face with the deeper problems of life we must understand that there is something lying underneath, and that only as we strive to reach this can we show ourselves fit for life's task.

Life is the test of the long run. It is not an easy task. Its solutions are not clear and ready. But it is a run we can make; it is a task we can accomplish. A Federal commissioner listened attentively to a proposed plan, and finally gave his approval. But he added, "Do you know that you have entered upon a hundred years' job?" "We do," was the instant response, "and so we haven't an hour to lose." God calls us, and He leads.

XI.

THE WIDENING UNIVERSE.

DEEP in the consciousness of men lies the conviction that for earnest and devoted consecration to any cause there is no limit to the possibility of result. He who truly loves his calling or pursuit is aware of the fact that there are wide areas for him to possess which as yet lie undiscovered. And even if he feel his incapacity to discover and possess them, he is not ready to say that no other is capable of this task. The most conceited or self-confident man dare not claim that human ability and capacity have come to their final flowering in him.

As we consider how man's universe widens as he loves and devotes himself to any one cause, we find a confirmation of the words, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear

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heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

Following this thought, we see how the loving mind and heart ever lives in a widening and expanding universe. This is true in our most commonplace experiences. He who loves the stars and the flowers will exclaim with the psalmist that “the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork.” And his universe will be an ever widening one, for he will discover the presence of God even in the common wayside bush. He who really loves his neighbor will begin to understand the power of love that passeth all knowledge. His universe will ever be a widening one, for he will be in the presence of the Eternal, whose love fills the earth as the waters cover the sea.

But in a more particular sense we discover how a devoted mind and heart enlarges its own world. We look out on the heavens at night and see a white patch of

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light. To the naked eye it has the appearance of a filmy vapor. This is all it will remain to those who have no further interest in heavenly bodies. But for him who really loves the stars, what a widening universe there is! He turns his telescope upon that milky spot, and it miraculously expands into a whole world of planets, each moving with as much regularity and purpose across the beaten tracks of the sky as the planet upon which we live. Within the radius of the natural eye one can count six thousand stars; the telescopes of our modern observatories multiply this range of vision more than two hundred times, and in that ever widening area a hundred million suns are seen to revolve.

Even after the eye of man, looking through the strongest telescope, has exhausted its power, the universe of the heavens still continues to widen. For a sensitized plate is applied to the eye-piece of a telescope, the huge tube is turned to what seems an empty space in the arching

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heavens, and after long exposure the plate is dotted with thousands of tiny points,—each point registering a planet circling in its orbit at a distance beyond even the guess of man. What the human eye can not see is by this miracle made known to human knowledge, and there is not a scientist foolish enough to dispute these facts. Eye hath not seen,—and yet to the mind of man it hath been revealed. Think of the enthusiasm of the psalmist as he said, “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy finger, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained.” And yet that ancient Hebrew had no conception of the innumerable unseen worlds the Almighty was holding in the hollow of His hand. For beyond all human vision a thousand million suns and planets were revolving, and he could see only a few stars.

Shall we stop with the astronomer? What the telescope reveals to us on the scale of the vast the microscope reveals on the plane of the minute. How many

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spheres as large as an orange or even a football would it take to fill the area of our globe? And yet such an inconceivable number of spheres are packed into every dewdrop, and science discovers that in each one of these infinitesimally small molecules is a stellar system as regular as the solar system, and much more marvelous because a million million times more minute. Can we stop here? The same widening universe opens up for the botanist, the geologist, the chemist, the physicist, the psychologist. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which lie discoverable for every true devotee of science.

Or turn to what we regard as ordinary inventive ability. How have the discoveries of the last hundred years added to the sum total of our knowledge and comfort! And yet, does any one believe there is a limit to the possibilities of creative genius? Every invention is but as a pebble dropped into the bottomless lake of

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life's possibilities starting the concentric circles to move closer in shore. The invention of telegraphy was a feat which our forefathers would have ascribed to a black hand, and the ancients have written down as a miracle. To operate a keyboard in Baltimore and make another keyboard in Washington register the same signals so that an intelligent and accurate message could be reproduced, might well have seemed to the men of sixty years ago as the limit of telegraphic communication. But for the minds devoted to this pursuit there was a widening universe, and soon the subtle currents of electric power were running over the mountains and under the seas, until the whole world became a network of telegraphic appliance.

Was this the end? Had the limit of electricity to transmit messages been reached? Not at all. Other minds were only stimulated. The universe continued to widen. What Morse in 1844 perhaps had not dreamed off, Bell in 1876 was putting into

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operation, and the wires began to carry audible speech over widely separated distances. And still the universe widened. For Marconi made the very air articulate and compressed the expanse of the ocean in the speaking limits of a drawing-room.

These are only a few of the many illustrations that suggest themselves to us. Who dares be hopeless or pessimistic about the future or declare what may not yet be in store for the loving mind and the searching heart?

What is true in the physical realm is true also in the mental. We sometimes deplore the fact that we have no great men such as lived twenty or fifty or two thousand years ago. We compare our literary age with the Elizabethan or ancient classical; we speak of philosophers and think of Plato and Kant; we study art and go back to the period of the Renaissance, as though literature and philosophy and art were dead in this day and generation.

Even in a field where it may seem that

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the old is better than the new is there ever the expansive power of the mind to grapple with humanity's growing problems. Man is so constituted that he is forever equal to his emergencies. Not every man has been a great man or a leader, to be sure, but a man for every age and every crisis of the world's history has appeared. Humankind has not yet been left without a mind ready for the demands of the hour or an innumerable company capable to undertake the tasks of the moment. At times there has seemed to be a long waiting for such men, as though the currents of life were running to the shore and there were no escape from the shoals. But just as we have steamed along the coast and the land closed in on all sides, and at the moment when our ship seemed sure to strike the reef, the shore began to give way, there was a broadening of the waters, and we found ourselves in a haven for safe anchorage and a future starting-point on our journey; so in times past have the ob-

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stacles confronting the State, the Church, the school, the individual, melted away as the widened universe of some mind opened out, and a safe repose was found until the further steps of progress needed to be taken.

It is most suggestive to study the problems with which successive ages have had to deal. All the puzzles, for example, that the modern mind has grappled with confronted Greek philosophy four hundred years before Christ was born. The Greeks magnificently answered them, but only from their point of view and limited experience. Their answers did not solve the problem, but they served to stimulate the thought of succeeding ages as the widening universe of man's mind demanded. Plato's mind was a high tower in the Ancient World, but it was not high enough to darken succeeding minds. The intellect of the great German philosopher has been regarded as the highest peak in the range of modern mental capacity. The mighty

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stirrings in his brain piled up the world of thought mountain high, and men are still climbing to reach that height. But as a lower mountain, looked at from the plain, will hide the higher mountains beyond, so, standing on the level of the present, we dare not say that contemporary thought does not, or that future thought will not, see yet higher peaks of intellect. The more we study the progress of thought the more do we discover the power of mind and the capacity of life to unfold an ever-growing and widening world.

This fact has deep meanings. If the Almighty has put man in a widening universe and has given him the power to grow with it, is there to be a sudden end to this growth? Why shall it not continue as long as the universe? The universe is not merely this world, it is the whole creation and thought of Almighty God. Why, then, should we limit life to this world, and not rather consider it co-extensive with God's universe, and hence eternal?

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This has ever been man's belief, even in the ages of tradition long preceding the times of history. And there has been no power able successfully to drive this thought from the minds of men. Ancient and modern doubt and skepticism have been as little able to confine man in his thought to a life that ends in this world, as the stone that was rolled in front of Jesus' grave was capable of holding Him a prisoner therein. Science does not separate us from God, but ever brings us closer to Him. And the nearer we come to Him the more are our minds stayed by the power of an endless life. "What aforesaid men ignorantly believed, Jesus hath declared unto us, and hath brought life and immortality to light." As death was not the culmination of, but only an incident in His life, so can death have no fears for us, for we are already in our Father's house, living the life eternal, and shall simply enter its larger room.

Our unfinished work, the hundred plans

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we have evolved and the thousand ambitions we have cherished, will not come to naught. In that wider universe that shall naturally unfold for us we shall labor and love throughout eternity. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Because I live ye shall live also. Where I am there ye shall likewise be. What that universe is, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but it exists as surely as do the planets revolving in space beyond our power of sight; it is as real as human love, which we feel, but can not understand.

What is our warrant for these statements? Not the voice of the scientist. If he tells us there is no human immortality, we reject his statement. But not because of lack of proof—simply because of his own personal disbelief. If he tells us there is human immortality, we gladly accept his statement. But not because he has proved it—simply because he personally believes it. For “the faith of immortality depends on a sense of it begotten, and not

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on an argument of it concluded.” (Bushnell.) This sense is begotten of God; it is His creation, implanted in the heart and life of man. As we love Him we prepare ourselves for all that He has in store for us. We nourish this life so that it naturally widens into the life beyond.

As we contemplate the resurrection of Jesus, it is a significant fact that He appeared in His resurrection body to none save His followers. Those who loved Him saw Him and recognized Him as soon as He exhibited some trait of character or manner of speech with which they had been familiar in His lifetime. The eyes of the two walking with Him to Emmaus were beholden simply because they were looking down upon the ground, and not up at Him. As soon as they looked upon His face they recognized Him and understood why their hearts had so burned within them as He talked with them.

Here is the conclusion of the whole matter. The soul that is preparing itself for

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immortal life, that is looking upon the fair face of the Eternal, is able to recognize and comprehend immortality. The pure in heart shall see God; they who love Him shall enter into the Kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." Immortality thus becomes an experience and we begin to live the immortal life here and now.

XII.

EVENING AND MORNING.

WE read in Genesis that the evening and the morning were the first day. The progress of creation was from nightfall until dawn, and not from daybreak until sunset. The eternal forces were working not through the bright hours of sunlight until darkness, but through the dark hours of the night until sunrise. The earth in the beginning was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

We think of the end of the world as a day of great darkness, when the sun shall be veiled and the moon hidden. But this may be but the beginning of the world, or of a new era. When the earth trembles and the mountains burn and smoke covers the land, man fears that the last moment of the world has come. But the great cataclysms of history have marked beginnings

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rather than final stops, and we note the order of progress from evening until morning.

Darkness is so much a suggestion of dread, and even of death, that we fail to note its significance. In the divine economy it is the beginning, and not the end, of the day. It is the evening and night through which man must pass to the morning and day. If we can grasp this truth we shall have a key with which to open many a dark chamber of life, and light will stream upon many a clouded and confused problem.

In the beginning darkness was upon the face of the waters. It was upon this darkness that the Spirit of God breathed. Had there been light at the beginning, there would have been need of neither sun nor moon nor stars nor even of God Himself. God alone is Light. All else is darkness until He breathes, and then He leads His children through the night into the day. At the end of the day there is not night

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again, but the new and endless day which John on Patmos saw, where "there shall be no need of a candle, nor light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth it light, and they who dwell there shall reign for ever and ever." From the chaos and darkness of Genesis to the heavenly order and light of Revelation—this is the divine progression.

We find darkness at first on the face of man's intellect. We call the years which divided ancient from modern history the Dark Ages. But this age was as the first streaks of dawn compared with the darkness of history's beginning. This darkness at the beginning can not be penetrated. Scholars devote their best energy to lift the veil of dimness. They can go back a certain way only. Then mystery and myth begin. The light of day becomes enveloped in a mist, and this mist leads to night. Into this night there is no passing. The progress is from darkness to day, and not otherwise.

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It would seem as though there were a divine wisdom here in blocking man's way into the past. It would seem as though man, like Moses, were asking to see the face of God, and that the answer came back, "My face thou shalt not see, for there shall no man see Me and live." There is a reason here. For we know that men who persist in remaining in the dark, even although their first purpose was a good one, are not fit for the day. They lose their organs of sight like the mice in Mammoth Cave and the moles in the earth. Herein is a suggestion, too, why scholars who live only in the past, or whose interests are subjective and not objective, promulgate views often which have no relation to or importance for the light and life of our world. They are called closet-philosophers, because they never move beyond the rooms in which they work.

The mind of man begins by groping. He is first blind. Even after his eyes have been anointed he sees men as trees walk-

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ing. In the beginning, to drop the figure, he is in the region of ignorance. He understands but a few facts, and these often he is unable to demonstrate. He must reach his conclusions by making mental leaps. He can not pick out a way step by step. When God called Abraham to go forth into an unknown land, Abraham was in darkness. His only light was the fact that God called him. So the mind of man moves in darkness when his intellectual instincts call him to go forth into a new country. His only light is the persistence of the call. There are streaks of light in the darkness sometimes, but too often they are not the real light. They are

“The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.”

It is well to note this fact. It is declared by some that darkness reigns only in the realm of religion; that in science there is light, and no darkness at all; and that this light lighteth every one that cometh into the world. We should not get very far

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if we depended only upon the light of science. Here, as well as everywhere else, there is night in the beginning, a groping in the dark, reaching out the hands of speculation and hypothesis, until there is something firm to grasp hold of and day can be drawn in. In every department of the mental life we go forth with theories, with stray bits of testimonies. As we cling to these, by the faith that is in us, light begins to dawn and we are able to see.

There is darkness in the beginning on the face of man's moral aspirations. Man desires to be good and to do right. But he has a very limited insight into what is good. We are disturbed sometimes at the relentless recital of immorality in the Old Testament. Instead of declaring, on the one hand, that the accounts of wholesale murders and of wickedness frequently resulting in tragedy are a sufficient reason for rejecting the Bible as a moral guide, or, on the other hand, of assuming that God was responsible for such doings, and

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therefore can not be a good or loving God, it is well to look at such accounts squarely and ask why they are permitted in a book that takes a higher moral plane than any other book ever written. The accounts of immorality in the Old Testament do not vitiate, but emphasize the moral teaching of the Bible. And this Book would not be true to itself if there were no details of darkness in the moral strivings of its heroes. It is an account of human nature, and human nature has its evening before its morning. Go as far back as we can into the beginning of mankind, and we find him moving in moral darkness. The immediate members of his family or clan were his friends. But everybody else was his enemy. And any means was honorable which would enable him to conquer and to kill his enemy. Even after Israel had advanced far in its knowledge of God it still regarded Him as the God only of the Hebrews and would have excluded all other nations from the benefits of His love and

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wisdom. In the individual life the rights of one's neighbor, especially of woman, were not considered in the light of our modern altruistic and beneficent motives. Property of others was appropriated, sacred obligations were trampled upon. The law of most might and keenest shrewdness prevailed.

This could not have been otherwise. And yet man went forth out of darkness into light. The desire to be good and to do right constrained him. The darkness of his moral conduct was a schoolmaster. And he learned lessons which he carved in the milestones which mark civilization's advance. At the present time we are in the full light of day on many a moral question. The darkness of the beginning is past, and we shall go on into endless day as we use the light we have. But other questions rise continually concerning which we are in moral darkness. Every advance civilization makes is but the announcement of a new moral problem.

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Mankind was never in a darker age morally than that through which we have been and are passing in regard to the great moneyed interests of our land. Stealing was considered the unrightful taking of a loaf of bread or the breaking and entering into a bank at night, and a thief one who went about stealthily and with a jimmy, and a murderer one who shot down another in cold blood. But new kinds of stealing and lifetaking have germinated and grown so rapidly that printing presses have been kept busy describing and declaring against them. The great moral problem to-day is the problem of the trust, whether it be of capital or labor. While right-minded men are groping around in the darkness for a solution of the problem, all kinds of known and hitherto unknown wrongs, misdemeanors, and crimes are being perpetrated. But it is not a going back into the darkness of past ages. It is a mark of progress. Large and intricate combinations of capital, close and far-reaching

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amalgamations of labor, were inevitable. We are forced, to be sure, to protect ourselves from the maraudings and depredations of this night-time, and to set what lights we can to guide us in the darkness. But the day will dawn and the terrors and iniquities of the night will be an experience that taught us our way.

In the realm of morals as well as of intellect there is first evening and then morning. Darkness in the beginning is also on the face of man's spiritual yearnings. In his mental operations man endeavors to know. There is no moral or ethical principle, as such, involved. In his moral strivings man seeks to come into proper relations with his fellow-men, to be right before them and to have their approval. But in his spiritual yearnings man tries to come into close communion with the Eternal. This desire has always characterized man, and it represents his truest self. Man is religious, because he tries in spite of himself to break through the cloud that

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hides him from God. And singular as it may seem, God, who is Light, is ever represented as hiding in darkness. The peoples who lived before the Israelites groped in densest darkness. To them it was the night-time of God's existence. Their efforts to find Him are interesting, but not instructive. Their mythologies, it is true, struck many a light in the darkness, but the flames were feeble and soon died out.

The Israelites had a feeling for the light even in their midnight darkness. As they believed that the sun had gone in hiding over night and would reappear, so they also were convinced that God would some time come out of the darkness and show Himself to them. This belief was evidenced in such words as are reported of Moses when he is expostulating with God and cries, "Show me Thy face." But the Lord spoke to Moses, we are told, only out of the darkness and the clouds and the thick darkness. The mountain itself burned with darkness. In the darkness

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God made His pavilions. Darkness was in His paths, as Job said. Thick darkness was His swaddling band. His treasures were in darkness. And again and again the psalmist declares that clouds and darkness are about Him.

Yet this darkness is the precursor of light. It is evening first and the long hours of the night, and then morning. The writer of the Book of Revelation has the secret when he says, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." The writers of the Old Testament thought He came in the clouds, and that the clouds therefore enveloped Him. But he who saw the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven and the eternal light, saw that God comes not in, but with, the clouds and that the darkness is only in the seeming. Every eye shall see Him. Suffering is a cloud, but God is not in the cloud, He comes with it, and in the darkness is ever present to lead the trusting soul into the light. Our inability to understand the deep and

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hidden things of life, to know what the morrow is to bring forth, to comprehend the happenings even of to-day or of yesterday, are all clouds which envelop us. But they do not envelop God. He is not in the cloud, a part of it. He comes with the cloud. They are His messengers, modes of His workings, and "so far from delaying His coming, are the very chariots in which He comes."

No life can be complete without its night as well as day. The Spirit of God moves on the dark face of man's spiritual longings. He says, "Let there be light," and there is light. But He teaches us in lessons we ought not to misunderstand that there will be many a night of darkness in our lives, many an hour of fear and trembling and cold dread, many a season of loneliness and heartache. These are clouds in which He reveals Himself. They are not the end of hope and trust, but the beginning; not the close of life, but its opening, when the candle of our night-time, with its

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feeble and uncertain flame, will become needless as the great orb of day illumines our pathway. John saw this on Patmos because he walked with Jesus in Palestine. As he thought of darkness he remembered Jesus, the Sun of righteousness. This was the Light he experienced. And this Light "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He saw Him come with the clouds to usher in an endless day.

XIII.

EVERY MAN TO HIS OWN HOUSE.

AFTER a long discussion with Jesus and with each other concerning Jesus, the crowd dispersed, and "every man went unto his own house." This is a common experience of life. The lecture-room, the sanctuary, the banquet hall, the house of mirth, the shop, the factory, holds its assembly for the time being. And then learners, worshipers, revelers, toilers disperse and go home. The way of some may be the same for a while. But one by one they begin to drop off and turn to side paths, until every man has entered his own house. And into that house none but he can enter. For his house, which he finally enters, is not four walls and a roof, but the inner recesses of his own self.

This fact is full of meaning. It suggests

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that every man has his own house. The tendency to look into the house of another, especially at night, when the curtains are not drawn, or to roam about a vacant house, to see how its rooms are arranged, is as strong as it is natural. A large part of the tourists' time in Europe is devoted to visiting the homes of celebrated people and tramping about the palaces of royalty. We enter the house of some world-famed man, be it the house where he was born or in which he toiled or died, and listen with rapt attention as the attendant leads us from one room to another. But the voice of that attendant seems to be the voice of a far-off age, as it grinds out the hackneyed phrases, "Here was his sleeping apartment," or, "Here the living-room," or, "Here his study," and so on. These we have come miles to see; the spirit of the man who used them is still pervasive; it speaks, and we understand his writings or his works a little better. But after all we feel that this was

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not his real house and does not explain the man. We would still push behind the external into the real spirit of the man.

We have intimate friends. Our tastes are literary or scientific, and we have a certain *entrée* into the homes of literary and scientific men. We are invited into the drawing-room and engage in more or less desultory conversation in the midst of conventional surroundings. Or we are asked to the dining-room, where the conversation becomes intimate and familiar. Finally, perhaps, we are taken into the study or the laboratory. Now we have reached the inner sanctum. We see the books of our friend and the table at which he writes; or his microscopes and test-tubes and the place where he experiments. If our interest is keen, we tread as on hallowed ground. We are in the very place from which emanate essays and books charged with life and formulas far-reaching in their importance. But are we?

The thought soon fastens upon us that

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mere tools and a workshop do not let us into the secret of that man's labors and success. These are the mere commonplace. There stands the man. The secret of his work will ever remain hidden in his breast. For that is his house, and none may enter. And while he may be disposed to let everybody in and open up every corridor and chamber of his inner self, still it is beyond his power to disclose the mysteries and treasures of that inner house. The eyes of those who enter there must remain holden.

Again, we read a book, and if it is worthy of our time we immediately want to know something about the author. We image in our mind his likeness, and are eager to see his picture. We are interested in every scrap of news concerning him; how he lives, how he dresses, how he talks. We would peer into his house, his inner self, and with piercing and all-sweeping eyes discover the smallest detail of his personality and genius. We are not repulsed, but

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pleased, when he writes of himself in the first person and reveals himself as a leading character in one of his stories. But he lives in his own house, and we may not enter in.

Every man is under compulsion to go into his own house. He can not go into the house of another. His house must always be occupied. He can not bar the doors and windows and put up a notice that he has gone abroad. However far man may roam in his body, in his spirit he must stay at home. And his home life will represent his real self. However he may seem to others on the outside, as he comes in contact with them he can not be a seeming to himself. He must be what he is. And in the end, whatever kind of a man he is in his own house he will be to others who come to know him.

We are thus singled out and individualized. Our personality may be very much like that of our friend. But it is ours, nevertheless, and not his. Although he

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may understand us better than any one else, he will not be able to lift the veil entirely. And whatever our problems may be, he can not solve them for us. He may help, suggest, inspire, but in the end he can not act. Whatever sorrows we have we must bear alone. He may sympathize and condole and make the burden lighter, but he can not take our sorrow and bear it. That word of the prophet, speaking of Jehovah's Servant, that He "trod the winepress alone," is only too vividly brought home to every man or woman who must toil and weep.

In our joys it seems to be different, as though we could rollick around in another's house just as well as in our own. But the same rule holds here. Whatever the mirth or enjoyment, if it be anything real to us we must enter with it into our own house and there live it. Especially is this true in those things which appeal to our æsthetic and intellectual natures. The beautiful landscape is ours only as we look

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at it through the windows of our own house. The masterpiece is ours only as we see it with the eyes of our own soul. The oratorio, the musical drama, is ours only as it impinges on the tympanum of our inner ears. Others may interpret for us and make the meaning clear. But they can not see or hear for us. Into our own house we must go, and there make the music, the painting, the far-sweeping meadow our own.

So of learning. The mechanic can show the apprentice how to use his tools, but he can not handle them for him. The teacher can unfold a subject for his student, but he can not carry the subject into the mind of the student. Apprentice and pupil must each go into his own house and there master the lessons for himself.

As it becomes more and more apparent that man is a sole tenant in his own house, it is of some importance how he furnishes the house. Some furniture he will have inherited. But even here he will be re-

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sponsible for its arrangement. The most of his material he will have brought, or will constantly be bringing from the outside. And what his house ultimately is will turn upon his attitude to this great outside.

The artist's house will exhibit his artistic taste; the literary man's, his scholarly habits; the mechanic's, his practical bent. So the world will be able to mark them off and put each in his proper class. But whether or not he remains in that class depends upon his attitude to the forces that play about him in nature and the world of thought and action, and also to what extent he allows his natural tendency to control him. The artist must ever try to realize his ideal. The suggestions of nature and of his fellow-man must form the avenue along which this realization is to run. So he is ever bringing into his house the material that will best enable him to furnish it according to the tastes demanded by his real self. If he is indifferent to these out-

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ward promptings he will soon show it in his inner activities. And his house will be no longer the natural place of entry for everything that is artistic and beautiful.

We are all in this sense artists. For we are engaged in perfecting the highest of all arts, that of right living. And here we undervalue too greatly the necessity of setting our own houses in order, or, when we have done so, the imperativeness of keeping them in order. We have eyes to see outward, and can see, or think we can see, the disorder in our neighbors' houses. We have no eyes to see inward, and therefore are blind so far as our real world is concerned. The outer world and the world of our neighbors will be colored by our own world. That word of Jesus concerning the mote and the beam is very much in point. We are small enough to see the tiny speck in our brother's eye, but not big enough to discover the beam in our own.

We are limited in choosing the comforts and delights of life for our material houses.

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We can buy only as we have means to pay. But in our spiritual houses there is no limit to what we may possess. We can have what we choose. And our choice will depend upon the attitude we take to the things which are real and permanent. A Wallachian legend represents a peasant, who had performed some good deed upon the earth, taken to heaven for his reward. When asked what he would have, he chose a worn-out bagpipe which had been thrown into a corner of the heavenly treasure-house. With this he came back to the earth. The riches of the Almighty were before him. He had a free choice, yet he was content with a broken instrument which had lost its full capacity of sound. Thus too often we make our choice and go forth contributing to life our weak and wheezy melodies, when we might have commanded an angel orchestra.

There is a further suggestion of truth in the statement, "Every man went into his own house." Unconsciously, it seems,

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did the inspired writer force into these words a meaning that reaches far beyond its intent. The men who went each his own way were the scribes and Pharisees and officers of the Sanhedrin; the mechanics and artisans and common folk of the great city of Jerusalem. They represent the classes into which all humanity falls. Since the day of Jesus all men like those of His day are divided according to their attitude to Him.

There were the indifferent. The question, "Can Christ come out of Galilee?" was a mere passing remark, with no particular significance for them. Like the soldiers, casting lots for Jesus' garments, and indifferent both to His life and death, so many others remained in a state of apathy concerning Him. They expressed themselves neither for nor against Him. Others there were, who, at the Pharisees' bidding, would have done Him bodily harm. But they were not any more interested in the Pharisee's cause. They took the same

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attitude a bribed voter might take who cares neither for the interests of the man who buys his vote nor for the cause of good government. There are those, also, who had a conviction concerning Jesus' merits, but who nevertheless remained indifferent. These said, "Of a truth this is a prophet." But they cared little for the words of His prophecy or the example of His precept. He was simply a rivulet emptying into the stream of humanity, and no more to be recognized after His time than is a creek mingling its current with that of a river.

These men, who were indifferent to Jesus, cared little whether He was a man who perverted the people or was indeed the Light of the world. Their houses were furnished with the thoughts they carried there, and according to these they lived.

Next to the indifferent class stood the actual opposers and revilers of Jesus. They were headed by the scribes and Pharisees. They objected to Jesus' teaching because it set at variance their privi-

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leges and prerogatives. They did not propose to be disturbed in their rights. One recourse was open to them: to cause Jesus' death. This they were ready to accomplish by the aid of false witnesses. They were actually at work trying to trump up evidence against Him. They went into their houses, when the talking was done, carrying with them the spirit of antipathy. Later we find them at the foot of Jesus' cross. Their hostility was so great that even after His crucifixion they could not rest content, but went to feast their eyes on His torture and to hurl their poisoned epithets at Him.

Among those who went each to his own house were also the earnestly thoughtful. They had a share in the discussion concerning Jesus. There were the officers who had been sent by the Pharisees to take Jesus, and, returning empty-handed, replied, "Never man spoke as this Man." There was Nicodemus, the Pharisee, who, when his brother Pharisees would have con-

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demned Jesus without a hearing, asked, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" There were those whom He had mightily impressed, and who said, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this Man hath done?" There were those, also, who were convinced concerning Jesus' identity and who declared, "This is indeed the Christ." The earnestly thoughtful were quick with sympathy. They listened to the Christ until they understood Him. When they went down to their own houses they had different feelings and thoughts. Later on at the cross their eyes were full of tears and their hearts of anguish. They saw their friend and Savior dying. In the stillness of His death their sympathy became actualized in service. They lifted His body from the cross and wrapped it in linen garments and laid it with the spices brought by Nicodemus, the believing Pharisee.

"And every man went unto his own

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house.” He carried with him his own food for thought. The food was mixed with indifference or with hostility or with a willingness to hear and understand. Jesus’ question, “What think ye of the Christ?” sounds to-day with all the intonations of the centuries behind it. Every man must take this question into the recesses of his own being. As he goes into his own house he must choose to answer it either in the spirit of disinterestedness or of disloyalty or of surrender and service.

XIV.

THE INCARNATION OF IDEAS.

THERE has always been an interesting discussion as to whether an idea has any reality. To the question, "Which is real, the idea of a machine or the machine itself?" the answer probably would be, "The machine is real." For there it stands; it is in operation; we marvel at the work it can perform. The idea of the machine, however, can not be seen. It has no objective significance for the beholder.

If we should push the inquiry further, however, and ask, "How did this machine come to be?" we would be told that some man invented it. This would be an admission that the machine did not come into existence of itself. And if we inquired still further we should learn that it did not come into existence primarily because some

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man or a number of men made it, but because of an idea which originated in the brain of some man. So back of the machine was the idea of the machine. The idea was real before the machine was actual.

Now, if the machine is real, and if the idea of the machine as it existed in the mind of the inventor was real, what is the answer to the question, "Which is the more real, the idea or the machine?" This is no idle question. Men's minds have become dizzy as they have given it thought. Is it perhaps possible that the objects which we see: trees, houses, birds, men, are not real after all, but that only the ideas of these objects have reality? For instance, here is a house. It burns down and ceases to exist. The idea of that house, however, still remains. All the burnt and ruined hills and levels of San Francisco are not sufficient to blot out the picture of the city as it existed before the morning of April 18, 1906.

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We know a man. He dies. Our idea or impression or memory of that man still lives. We continue to know him as he was in life. Some of our most real as well as tender impressions to-day are the memories of those we laid to rest years and years ago.

Or take a statue or a picture or a flower. It presents an idea of beauty that possesses our soul. When the statue falls down and is marred, or the picture fades and becomes dim, or the flower withers and dies, the idea of its beauty endures and is still real to us.

Or take a good man or a good child. The man is honest and sober, the child is attentive and obedient. Both the man and the child give us an idea of goodness that is appealing. But to-morrow the man may be incomprehensibly guilty of some wrong act, and the child may fret and annoy us beyond endurance. The goodness of the individual man and boy is gone, but the idea of goodness remains. For we should

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have to admit that the goodness of yesterday was a real thing; and if real in them, it can be real in others. Hence the idea of goodness would have universal reality.

So we can continue with other illustrations. The fact which underlies this line of argument has led philosophers to maintain seriously that only the idea is real, all else is copy or shadow. The idea of man remains, the individual man disappears; the idea of beauty remains, beauty itself is destroyed; the idea of goodness remains, goodness itself is never perfect. Therefore that which remains is alone truly real.

Here is a fact we can not dispute, and the more we contemplate it the more it possesses us. But if we should allow this thought to dominate our thinking as it dominated the thinking of the great Greek philosopher and of many other profound thinkers since his day, we should lose ourselves in the clouds as they did. For if

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we make only the idea of beauty real, we shall end by having nothing beautiful upon the earth. Why bother about having actual beauty when this would be unreal? If we make only the idea of goodness real, we shall have no goodness upon the earth. Why should we try to be good, when trying to be good would be unreal and we could satisfy ourselves by merely thinking about goodness. If we make the idea of God alone real, we shall have an unreal God; hence no God at all. So why worship an unreal God or try to conform our lives to his commands. For even worship and obedience would be unreal. Only the ideas of worship and obedience could have any reality.

The fallacy in this method of reasoning is the failure to recognize that life is something more than mere thinking. It comprehends doing as well. Our thinking must ever be related to our doing. Thought must be put into practice. Otherwise it is nothing. A thought or an idea can have

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reality only as it finds expression in some personality. We can have a thousand ideas or conceptions, but if we do not give them shape and form in some tangible way, they can have no reality.

Here, for example, is the thought of a mother's love. This is only an idea. We may discuss it, grow eloquent over it, exhaust the possibilities of tongue and pen to describe it. Yet as a mere idea it would mean little or nothing to one who never realized what is the love of woman. But let the idea of a mother's love have relation to the personality of some mother; let it assume visible form; let it become incarnated, a mother wearing herself out at the bedside of her child, or battling against the flames or in the water, giving up her own life for that of her child, if need be, and the idea of a mother's love assumes some meaning, it becomes real.

Liberty is an idea. We may sing songs to it, we may teach it and preach it, and yet it will not mean much, only as an idea.

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But let a nation become oppressed or enchained, and the idea of liberty assumes a concrete form. It becomes flesh and blood in every man and woman struggling for freedom. And the men will march out and stand behind their guns and make their ideas speak in thunder tones and the women will remain at home and mold bullets and weave bandages and give expression to their ideas in every step they take, in every word they utter, in every look that flashes from their eyes.

What is religion but the ideas of goodness and purity incarnated in men and women living by the force of righteous convictions? What is education but the ideas of truth and honesty incarnated in the minds and souls of men who would find the true and the real? Temples are built and books are published and pictures are painted to give expression to the ideas which have become incarnated and live and move and have their being in the head and heart of some personality.

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So an idea is real. But it is real only as it has relation to some personality. And that personality must be a worthy representative of his idea. As Emerson has said, "Ideas must work through the brains and arms of good and brave men, or they are no better than dreams." Many are the examples which prove this truth. Rousseau, the great champion of an ideal education, allowed his children to go unclothed and unfed as paupers and beggars on the streets. His idea of education was not incarnated, it had no relation to a worthy life. He is only a type of the French thinker of the eighteenth century, whose high and lofty ideas had no visible unfolding in flesh and blood. They preached a "gospel of human perfectibility;" they lived a life of brutal immorality. Jesus characterized all such when He told the Pharisees that their life of precept had no counterpart in their life of example. Their ideas took form, but it was the form of dead men's bones and all

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uncleanness. Incarnation, on the other hand, means life and purity. Great ideas become real, therefore, in great souls.

Heine wrote a lyric in which he represents an ordinary fellow—awkward, listless, irresolute—who suddenly is changed into a spirited and noble young man upon the approach of his lady love. This is an allegory, in which the poet tries to show that he is at his best only in the presence of his muse. When she comes, his thoughts are charged with life. They breathe and speak. So commanding men of all ages have declared that it was not they, but an idea flowing through them, which caused them to perform their almost superhuman deeds.

It is nature's way to wait for the man who is ready for the incarnation. And then the Word becomes flesh. Often nature must wait a long time for the coming of such a man. Ages before Luther did men believe that the just shall live by faith and that man may speak to God without

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the mediation of a priest. But not until Luther did these ideas become incarnated. Then, facing his accusers and judges, he said, "Here I stand; I can not do otherwise; so help me God!" Long before Lincoln did men preach that all men should be physically free. But not until Lincoln came did this idea become incarnated. Then, facing the world, he said, "A house divided against itself can not stand. I believe this Government can not endure half slave and half free." The ideas of Luther and Lincoln were the realities in these great movements; the Protestant Reformation and the Emancipation Proclamation were only the incidents. For in their ideas the thought and hope of the ages were crystallized and expressed. The Word became flesh.

Erasmus tells us that in his day "there was a project to have a congress of kings to enter into mutual agreements to preserve peace with each other and through Europe." In the beginning of the six-

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teenth century, four hundred years ago, the idea of universal peace was floating over Europe, and yet but yesterday we closed one of the most sanguinary wars of history. This idea has not yet become incarnated. But some day a man will appear who will gather in himself the hope and expectation of the centuries, and then nations will learn to war no more.

So we come to the real meaning of the truth, "The Word became flesh." Whenever we speak of God we intuitively associate with Him certain ideas. We say God is good, God is just, God is love. So we speak of the ideas of goodness, of justice, and of righteousness. Probably the first of these ideas, that of goodness, predominates in our minds. It is in fact inclusive of all the others. As goodness is an idea with us, so it is an idea with God. It is conceivable that God could entertain this idea as any one of us could entertain an idea, keeping it entirely to ourselves, turning it over in our minds and finding in it in-

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finite enjoyment. It is not our nature, however, to keep anything good or great to ourselves, unless there be a selfish motive back of it and we desire to reap some material gain therefrom. And even then, to attain our ends, we must impart our idea to others. So it is not in the nature of God to keep His goodness to Himself, nor could He do so if the idea of goodness were to have any meaning for us. God's idea of goodness, therefore, must become incarnated. It can exist only in relation to some personality. And that personality must be a most worthy representative of goodness.

As we cast our eye over the events of Old Testament history we find that God's goodness always has relation to some personality. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Abraham trusted God, and his faith was counted for righteousness. Elijah spoke with the Almighty, and was taken to heaven in a flame of fire. These narrations and many others

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are the attempts of the early Hebrew writers to show how God's goodness became flesh and blood in some personality, and in this way, although imperfectly, revealed God to man. If God was working in and through man after this manner, and as he is the supreme type of perfection, it was inevitable that there must come a moment when God would reveal Himself in the ideal incarnation. This moment burst with all its fullness upon an expectant world. The Word became flesh, and Jesus Christ walked the valleys and hills of Palestine the embodiment of goodness, purity, and truth.

As we contemplate this thought of God entering the human race in the person of Jesus Christ, we must not forget that, while the incarnation to us is an event in time, with God it was an eternal idea. The ancient Hebrews had many a foregleam of this idea becoming a fact. They were convinced that God must come to the earth in visible form. So they represented Him as

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living in a tabernacle where His name dwelt. Or they represented Him as the Shekinah, the symbol of the Divine Presence, which rested in the shape of a cloud or a visible light over the mercy seat. This was God's glory dwelling in a tabernacle. The writer of John's Gospel uses this same imagery. "The Word became flesh" in Jesus Christ and "*tabernacled* among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." God in the Old Testament is unseen; He dwells in a tabernacle; His glory shines round about. God in the New Testament is seen; He tabernacles with men, and in Him they behold God's glory. So Paul declares that, although "no man had ever seen God," yet "the only begotten Son hath made Him known."

We must also remember that the Incarnation was God's idea, or word, coming into the world in the form of a man. God was already in the world. His Spirit was all-pervading. He must give His idea

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form in the personality of a man. And not of a man who must, but who might do His will. Jesus, therefore, came into the world a man in all points as we are, except without sin. And He was without sin, not because it was made impossible for Him to sin, but simply because He chose to remain pure. If He could not sin, then His temptation has no significance, for only one who can sin can be tempted. He was free to disobey God as we are. He willed to do God's will. This was the incomprehensible miracle which puzzled His disciples as much, if not more, than it puzzles us. That He, the Son of God, should also choose to be the Son of man, coming into and remaining upon the earth to suffer its temptations and trials, was to them the deepest mystery. They saw the grandeur, however, and the overpowering nobility of Jesus' sacrifice. Paul, overcome by the unselfishness of such a love, gives it expression in the words, Behold the Christ, "who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes be-

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came poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich.”

From the divine and from the human side, therefore, the Incarnation was ideal. It was all that God and Christ could do. It was all that needed to be done. Like a mighty bridge which stretches high above an angry current permits a man to cross from one side to the other, so the Incarnation spans this sinful world. With the aid of Jesus Christ man comes to God. The New Testament never allows us to forget this fact. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, who was the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person, the Word become flesh which tabernacled among us full of grace and truth. Eternal love and eternal life became flesh in Jesus Christ.

What is the significance to us personally of this great truth? It means that God is an eternal possibility of incarnation, and

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that man has a permanent capability of incarnation. What God's intention was for Jesus Christ it is for the whole race. God is forever on the side of man, and earnestly desires that he be saved. Hence God's word will become flesh in man if he intend that it shall. Through Jesus of Nazareth He calls him to be worthy, so that goodness and purity and truth can flow in him and find expression.

XV.

THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

To womanhood Jesus paid His noblest tributes. The Gospel narrative would be devoid of many a beautiful passage and bereft of some of its most inciting and irresistible truths had it not been for the occasions women offered Jesus for preaching His sermons. The story of the woman who spent all her substance for healing is full of suggestion.

She shows us that Jesus never was so busily engaged that He could not stop to help in case of need. She was healed by Him as He was going to the house of Jairus, whose little girl lay at the point of death. The emergency was a great one; the father feared the Master would not come in time; Jesus was hurrying to reach the sick-room. And yet, as He feels that

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tug at His garments He knows there is another helpless soul imploring His aid, and, seemingly forgetful about the dying child, He stays His steps to give the relief sought.

This woman shows us also that real faith grows out of a sense of need. She had been ailing twelve years, had suffered much of many physicians, had spent all her money, yet had not become better, but rather worse. Sick and poor and friendless, this was her condition. But as soon as she heard of Jesus she came to Him. He had helped others, He could help her.

We shall make a mistake if we attribute this act to the despair of a woman who had lost all and who could well afford another venture. Great trial and sorrow often drive one from God rather than to Him, and despair never leads up the heights. After every great disaster, when homes are made desolate, the tide of men's feelings runs like a mill-race, with all the power of gravity tugging at it down into the depths

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of despair. Only the anchor of faith will hold against the counter-streams of sorrow and distress. Sailors know they will have need of an anchor, and so they prepare for the emergency. Out of this same sense of need grows real faith, which like an anchor steadies men on the sea of life and holds them from the currents that run on the rocks or into the whirlpool.

As this woman had real faith, she shows us further that nothing can hinder such a faith. It was a mountain-moving faith, the kind of faith Jesus tried to instill into His disciples. There was the mountain of social ostracism. The Mosaic law banished such as she beyond the usual walks of life. The sticklers for that law would have been only too quick to stone or otherwise punish her. But her faith told her such a law could not be just; that He who would violate a similar law to cure on the Sabbath day would also set this one aside. So with the words trembling upon her lips, "If I can but touch His garments," she

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walked right over the towering height of her ostracism.

There was the mountain, also, of friendlessness. She was now a pauper. Poverty added to ostracism heaves up a mighty barrier. Such a barrier hung over this unfortunate woman wherever she walked, threatening to fall upon and crush her. But she lifted this mountain and flung it into the sea when she heard of Jesus. For she said within herself, "If I can but touch His garments, I shall be healed." Health was more than riches.

Immediately, however, another mountain rose before her, higher and more impassable than the other two. It was the mountain the multitude about Jesus formed, and which made approach to Him by such a weak and frail woman almost impossible. Let us understand what this mass of humanity was. Matthew says the people were literally storming Jesus, Mark declares they were knocking and pushing against Him, Luke tells us it was suffocat-

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ing to be in that crowd. The disciples, when Jesus turned and asked, "Who touched My garments?" rebuked their Master and said, "Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" It was preposterous in their eyes for Jesus to think He could tell the individual touch of any one in that crowd.

Imagine, therefore, this woman, disturbed in mind as well as weakened in body, throwing herself into that turbulent and jostling crowd. Consider the trampling of feet, the shouting of voices, the dust coming up into her face, the sun beating down on her head; look at her fearing and trembling lest her condition be discovered and she be immediately pounced upon by the unfeeling crowd. And yet, see her pushing onward with superhuman strength—superhuman because she had faith—now thrown to one side, now to the other, now backward, now effectually stopped by the wall of human flesh, but

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still struggling onward, her hands outstretched, her lips muttering that one refrain of hope and joy, "If I but touch His garments I shall be made whole." And then see the mountain of humanity roll away before her as she comes to her Savior.

From this incident we learn further that real blessing comes only as we openly acknowledge the benefit received. When she touched Jesus' garments and experienced the unutterable joy of relief she fell back to go unnoticed as she came. Already was she beginning to lose herself in that crowd. But the moment Jesus asked, "Who touched My garments?" she stopped, and when she saw that Jesus could not be put off with the assurance that no one in particular had touched Him, she came tremblingly and with fear to confess what she had done.

To give her this opportunity, Jesus framed His question. He was not asking for information, no more than He was

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when, after the disciples had been disputing who was to be the greatest among them, He asked, "What was it that ye disputed by the way?" or when walking with those other disciples on the way to Emmaus He said, "What manner of communications are these which ye have, and why are ye sad?" For the sole purpose of giving this woman an opportunity to make humble and open and full confession of her faith did Jesus ask that question, "Who touched My garments?"

It would have been but a barren blessing to her had she gone away in silence. On the other hand, it was never a matter of indifference to Jesus whether or not those whom He helped acknowledged His service. On one occasion He sent ten lepers who came to Him for healing on an errand to test their faith, and as they went they were cleansed. But only one returned to give thanks and glorify God. And Jesus, looking upon him, said, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" They

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had gone off benefited, but not blessed. To the one alone Jesus said, "Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." So to this woman, when she fell before Him to confess, He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Then, and only then, could she leave Him with the happiness and peace of a newly found life. The sustenance and healing we receive every day from God are benefits; they do not become blessings until we return thanks to Him and receive His benediction.

But we have not exhausted the truth this woman teaches us. There were hundreds of men and women touching Jesus as they thronged Him; there was only one touch that He felt. That touch was "the touch of faith." From the day when multitudes gathered to hear the great Teacher the world has been touching Jesus' garments. How close the contact has been we little consider as we move along our daily path. But take that figure out of our life, and the

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world will become as barren and desolate as are the hills and valleys of His native land from which He was driven.

This is no mere figure of speech. Civilization, with Christ at its head, has gone marching on. Its one impetus has been the possibility and privilege of touching Him.

Were there no power to draw men together so that human prejudice and hatred, human love and patience, could find expression and the lessons of common experience be taught, there would be little incentive for living. It would be just as well under such circumstances for men to hide themselves in caves and jungles and eke out their solitary existence until life should ebb away. There is this power, however, and as men touch each other there comes the spur to life. But if there were not some high ideal and worthy motive by which men are drawn together, the contact and communion of life would be but little better than an idle game. This incentive and this motive converge in the Christ.

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Men have eagerly run to Him and are thronging Him to-day as much as they thronged Him nineteen hundred years ago.

In this crowd we find the philosopher and theologian, the artist and the man of letters. They have heard that a virtue proceeds from Jesus. The record of past history is not to be discredited. For nineteen centuries there has been only one Figure who was great and powerful enough to attract and hold the interest and thought of men. So we find men who represent the intellectual and spiritual and æsthetic side of mankind in the multitudes which have touched Jesus. But they have too often typified the merely curious or indifferent or sneering or criticising element in every crowd. They brushed the very garments of Jesus, but He did not ask, "Who touched Me?" For He felt none of them touching Him.

So in Church and State, in school and home, Jesus has been the one great center of attraction. Ecclesiastics and statesmen,

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teachers and parents, have been thronging Him to draw upon the institutions they represent His virtue. Here He has stood, and a crown has been offered Him. But this crown has too often been the very one Jesus in His lifetime refused. It was not offered with an intelligent understanding of what His true mission was. These leaders would have crowned Him externally, so that He might give dignity and power to the provinces over which they presided, when He asked only that they receive Him into their lives and encourage others to do likewise. They pushed and tugged as they touched Him, but He asked not, "Who touched Me?" For theirs was not the touch of faith.

So individual men and women have been storming Jesus throughout the ages. They have touched Him as they have come in contact with godly men and women, whose influence is a divine blessing and from whose lives the Christ spirit proceeds. But their lives have not had an impetus up-

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ward. For as they looked upon these persons they have always found the frailties which make men and women too truly human. They have been quick to take an inventory of human mistakes and shortcomings rather than to make an investment of earnest and righteous effort. They have hidden the talent that was given them, for they said, "The Master is a hard one, He will take account of every weakness that besets us and every failure we make. So why try to increase our talent." The riches of the Kingdom were in reach of their grasp, but they did not stretch out the hand of faith, and Jesus did not know they touched Him.

So have men touched the Master as they have read the literary treasures of past and present ages. A man of learning wrote a chapter entitled, "The Lost Bible." He pictured a morning when men discovered that the Bible had been taken out of the world. Not only was the Sacred Book gone, but also every passage in every

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other book which had been inspired by the one Book. As they took up the volumes which had molded civilization in established forms of righteousness, they found that these books had blank spaces on almost every page, that the thread of the narrative was broken. There was little meaning in what remained. The power that had inspired the book had been withdrawn. So they cried in distress, "Give us back our Bible."

It would be too elementary to discuss the influence the Bible has had upon literature. Suffice it to say that the reading multitude must throng the Master on every literary avenue and highway. They can not help but touch Him here if they read anything worthy, for His Spirit is all pervasive. If they do not hear Him say, "Who touched My garments?" they may know they have not touched Him in faith.

Then in established religion itself the multitudes throng the Master. On the great roads worn smooth and hard by nine-

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teen hundred years' tramping of Christian travelers, how truly can it be said, "The whole multitude presses upon Him to touch Him, for they know that virtue goeth out of Him." And yet, how many individual communicants are there who hear Jesus say, "Who touched My garments?"

Men get into the habit of going to church just as they acquire other habits. While this is a habit always to be encouraged, it is not one of unmixed good for the individual so habituated. For he may get no nearer to the spirit of the Master than did those men who were brushing the very garments of Jesus on that Galilean road.

Some men go to church merely to see what is going on. They listen to the music and the prayers and the sermon, and go through all the outward motions of worship, but they never get into the spirit of the service. These are they who followed Jesus curiously, to hear what He might say or see what He might do; who touched His very garments, but who were not ar-

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rested by the question, "Who took hold of Me?"

Other men get into the habit of going to church in a hypercritical or tentative attitude. They are the self-constituted judges of what ought to take place in Church. They are experts on the form of worship, understand how much or how little of ritual should be used, take in at once what is wrong with the ushering or the singing or the serving of tables generally. They soon become professional sermon tasters, as there are professional tasters of tea and of other commodities, whose business is to do with the selling value rather than the nourishing qualities thereof. They are apt to judge the whole by a very little part, and are in a danger they do not realize, the danger that besets all professional tasters, whose sense of taste after a period of years begins to deceive them, so that everything tastes the same.

Such critics of all that goes on in Church are like those who thronged the Master, to

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see whether He would violate the law or to ask Him questions in order to entrap Him. Jesus never stopped one of them with His question, "Who touched Me?" for He never felt them tugging at His garments.

Then there are those who go to church because they feel they ought to. The training they have received, the profession they make, the position in life they take, force upon them a certain obligation to attend church. But during the service they are easily distracted, their minds wander, like water running down hill, to their engagements of the past week and to the plans for the future; they are casting mental balances of their business ventures; they are considering what they are going to get out of life, whether it be a financial gain or a social prominence or a satisfaction for mental efforts expended. These are real disciples of the Master. They represent the human bundles of weakness who followed Him closely, but whose minds

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were continually wandering from their service of Him to their own worldly prospects; who were saying to Him, "Master, we have left all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" who argued with considerable heat who was going to be greatest in His Kingdom.

And yet such as these were the only material Jesus had with which to build up His Kingdom. They were the only ones He could send to preach His gospel and carry on His work; He lost none of them, we read, except the son of perdition, even although at times they left Him. But how often was He grieved in His soul because of their weakness and listlessness! How patient He had to be with them! how gentle, in order to bring out their true selves! With them Jesus built a structure of unshakable foundation, yet we can not help but feel how much more successful He would have been could He have counted confidently on the unreserved service and following of His disciples! And to-day,

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how much grander and more noble would life be if all who call upon His name would do so in absolute surrender and consecration to His service!

“Touching Me every day, and yet at arm’s length from Me.” This was the comment of Jesus upon His followers. Thronging Him everywhere, and yet separate from Him. This is the verdict of history upon those whose surroundings have been most benefited by Him. They have touched Him, but not with the touch of faith, and He has not stopped to bless them.

Many there were in crowds about Jesus who never came in contact with Him. Others there were who were not of His immediate following, but who, when they heard of Him, came to Him with the touch of faith. No wonder, therefore, that Jesus marveled and said, “I have not found such faith, no, not even in Israel.” No wonder, also, that He added, “Verily I say unto you, Many shall come from the east and

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from the west who have no inherited right to the Kingdom, but they shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, while the children of the Kingdom will not be permitted to enter. For behold, there are last which shall be first, and first which shall be last.”

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