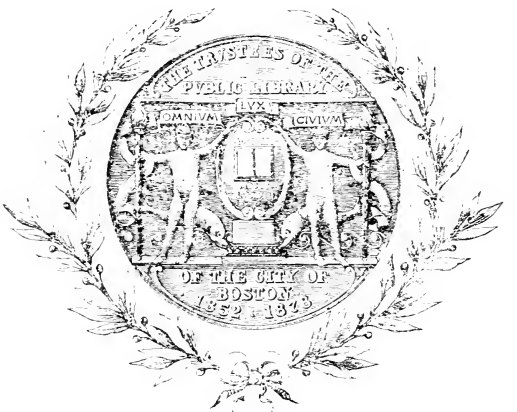
THE TEMPLE OF VIRTUE

PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM



THE TEMPLE OF VIRTUE

THE
TEMPLE OF VIRTUE

BY

PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1907

Published September 1907

TO

A. C. F.

CONTENTS

I

And if a man love righteousness, her labors are virtues; for she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude: which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life. — WISDOM OF SOLOMON, viii, 7.

THE TEMPLE OF VIRTUE

"If a man love righteousness," we read in the book of the Wisdom of Solomon, "her labors are virtues; for she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude." These are four great virtues. The world has long been well acquainted with them; and it is an interesting and suggestive fact, indicative of the unity of human thinking and experience and the clearness of moral insight, that they are the very virtues which were set apart as most important by the highest thought of ancient Greece. Plato, as most of us know well, and Aristotle, with the loyalty of true discipleship, called strong attention to four conspicuous virtues. These, as they were outlined and described in

the "Republic," and have been translated ever since, were wisdom and temperance, courage and justice.

Neither the Hebrew moralist, of course, who tells us that he sought out wisdom for his bride, and loved her beauty, nor the Grecian thinker, whose thoughts are still an inspiration to mankind, originated these particular virtues. They merely recognized their peculiar significance, and perceived their exceptional importance for the life of the individual and the welfare of the state. To the famous philosopher of Greece they were the cardinal, or *hinge* virtues, on which all other virtues were believed to hang or to depend. For that is what cardinal means, — a hinge. And the thought of the Jewish writer was evidently much the same. At least he was convinced that "nothing more profitable"

than these special virtues could possibly be found for human life.

Whether such, however, be the case or not, there can be no doubt that much of the dignity and worth of human character depends upon the presence in people's lives of these or closely kindred qualities. The moral life — and the religious life as well when we see it at its best and noblest — is made up in large part of separate and clearly distinguishable virtues. What these great virtues are, whence they spring, how they declare themselves, and whither they conduct the soul, are things deserving careful and devout consideration.

Goodness almost always has been looked upon as having a divine or supernatural origin. The highest human qualities have ever been considered the attributes of

heavenly or spiritual beings, if not indeed distinctly centred and embodied in one Supreme Creator who embraced them all. The moral law, as understood by nearly all the early peoples, was honored and enforced as having been imparted from on high. Moses had no monopoly, in this respect, of heavenly favors. The claim of divine assistance which was made for him by later generations was likewise made for Numa and the great Lycurgus, for Minos and the mythical Manu.

Moreover, it is an interesting fact that among the ancient Greeks—whose sense of beauty was so keen, and whose power to express it never yet has been surpassed—moral abstractions, or special virtues, were freely honored in a public and religious way. The stranger in Athens twenty centuries ago might have noticed

not alone the wayside altar that attracted Paul, which was built in honor of an unknown God; but he would have seen there other altars built to such definite human qualities as modesty and patience, truthfulness, liberality and mercy. History, indeed, has preserved particular mention of an altar to the last-named quality. "For," said Pausanias,[1] in writing of the things he saw in Athens, "the Athenians have in the market-place among other things not universally notable an Altar of Mercy, to whom, though most useful of all the gods to the life of man and its vicissitudes, the Athenians alone of all the Greeks assign honors."

Among the ancient Romans this interesting and suggestive custom was carried

[1] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, translated by A. R. Shilleto, vol. i, chap. xviii.

out still further, and given very beautiful and dignified expression. This sturdy people, as all our schoolboys know, had a mighty multitude of gods and goddesses. Almost all the sweeping forces and the striking features in the outward world of nature were referred to the control of separate and supernatural beings. There was one god of the spring and another of the harvest, one of the fields, another of the flowers, and another still who made the fruit trees blossom into beauty. There were gods, too, of the city and the household, of war and peace, of birth and death, of the lofty mountains, of the restless sea and the four great winds of heaven. In addition to all else, however, and much more significantly, the Romans, like the Greeks, deified the different virtues. Temples were built in honor of fortitude

and temperance, patience and prudence, honor, generosity, and concord. In these shrines the people worshiped, and at altars such as these they offered sacrifices. Sometimes these temples were built by private citizens and given to the city, but again the state itself erected them to signalize some great event or worthy undertaking. Thus Marius, we are told, after gaining "a stupendous victory over the Cimbrians and Teutons," came home to the Eternal City, celebrated his triumph, set up his trophies, and erected a temple to honor and courage. At another time the whole Senate dedicated an altar to friendship, "in respect of the great dearness of friendship" between Tiberius Cæsar and Sejanus.[1]

[1] Bacon, *Moral and Historical Works*, Essay "Of Friendship."

All this is but an indication of the great importance which everywhere has been attached to moral qualities of every kind. It may not always have been true that certain virtues were distinctly set apart as cardinal; but virtue itself has never failed of adequate and splendid recognition since the earliest days of ignorance and superstition. Within recent years, indeed, a new interest has been taken in ethical development, and fresh attention has been called to the value of superior moral characteristics. In our own country the existence of a national "Hero Fund" is alone an indication of this interest; but a more convincing and impressive proof has recently been given of it in a foreign city. A most unusual and significant official publication was lately to be seen on the out-

side of one of the government buildings of Paris, and deserved much more attention than many of the famous "sights" in that historic city. The document, which was a large one, ran as follows: —

République Française!

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ!

PREMIER ARRONDISSEMENT

TABLEAU

DES

ACTES DE COURAGE ET DE DÉVOUEMENT ACCOMPLIS PAR LES HABITANTS DU 1ER ARRONDISSEMENT.

A la trop grande publicité donnée par la presse aux malfaiteurs et à leurs exploits criminels dans notre cher Paris, n'est-il pas opportun d'opposer la probité, le dévouement, et le courage dont nos citoyens donnent chaque jour des preuves si nombreuses et si éclatantes? Notre devoir n'est-il pas de mettre en lumière les mérites et les vertus que la modestie des honnêtes gens se plaît bien souvent à tenir dans l'ombre et dans l'oubli?

C'est dans cette pensée que la municipalité

du 1er Arrondissement prie les habitants de nos quartiers de lui signaler les belles et bonnes actions de toutes sortes dont ils seront témoins ou dont ils auront connaissance.

Elle a également l'honneur de les informer qu'à partir du 1er Octobre les communications relatives à cette intéressante "Chronique du bien" seront reçues à la Mairie, enregistrées et affichées sur un tableau d'honneur afin que personne ne puisse les ignorer, et mentionées dans un procès-verbal detaillé sur le Livre d'Or de l'Arrondissement.

Les jeunes gens y puiseront chaque jour un exemple fécond d'abnégation, de générosité, et d'héroisme ; et nos compatriotes de tous les âges seront heureux de constater que notre race vaillante est toujours digne de son glorieux passé.

Le Maire,
V. Danoux.

Paris, le 25 Septembre, 1902.

That proclamation, as the date reveals, was originally made some five years since. And there beside the notice, in accordance

with its terms, was a list of those whose names had been recorded in the Golden Book of honor, the nature of their worthy actions being briefly stated.

Whatever may be thought or said in regard to the wisdom or the value of the scheme, we could hardly have a better demonstration of the fact that temples still are built, in one way or another, to the great and universal virtues, and that nothing is looked upon as more important, whether from the personal or from the public point of view, than the development of courage, self-denial, generosity, and loyalty to high ideals.

There can therefore be no doubt whatever in regard to the surpassing importance of great virtues, whether we confine ourselves to those which were long since set apart as cardinal, or extend the list to

others. The only question that can possibly arise relates to their constructive value, and to how they best may be developed in our lives.

Christianity from the very first has had little or nothing to do with any special virtues. "Love God and do as you please" was the moral rule laid down by Augustine, as a wise surveyor of the field of ethics has recently reminded us.[1] If a man but had the love of God in his heart, was the bold and clear assertion of this early Christian Father, nothing else was needed. He could not then go wrong; for all his impulses and inclinations would lead him in the paths of righteousness. And this, with hardly less distinctness, was the word of Jesus, from whom, of course, the thought or principle of Augus-

[1] George H. Palmer, *The Field of Ethics*, p. 142.

tine was borrowed. Jesus arranged no schedule of the virtues, unless we class the Beatitudes as such. He never enumerated to his disciples a long array of things to be avoided in the world, nor yet a special list of qualities to be acquired. Indeed, there were only three great sins which he condemned,—cruelty, hypocrisy, and uselessness, while almost all he had to say of the virtues could be summed up in the one word love, or pity. The love of man, however, was dependent in his eyes upon the love of God, or in one sense secondary to it. For the first and great commandment in the law was this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

If we adhere with closeness to the Christian method, therefore, there would

seem at first but little need of taking thought of separate virtues. They all are rooted in one central principle, and all depend upon a single spiritual impulse or emotion. Let the love of God be quickened or awakened in us, and then it follows as the day the night, and sweeping tides the soft compulsion of the distant moon, that courage, justice, self-control, and all the other noblest qualities of life will spring up well developed in our lives.

Nor can any of us seriously doubt, I think, the actual truth of this contention. The Christian religion brought to man the deepest and the all-sufficient word in this respect. For love in very truth is the fulfilling of the law, and he who loves God, and his neighbor in God, has little need of moral quickening and instruction.

While all of this is true, however, a

deeper and more vital point remains to be considered. This love which means so much is neither universal nor instinctive. It needs to be developed, if not indeed awakened, in us. We often lack, that is, the very impulse which has such creative force; and, when we look for ways in which to strengthen or arouse it, we find that nothing is a greater stimulus than human goodness in its highest reaches and sublime development. It is when we look upon the face of virtue, and catch its radiant beauty, that we are lifted up in consciousness of Power that is greater than the human. "The Universal," it has well been said, "does not attract us until housed in an individual." Truth comes to us through personality; and this is more especially the case with moral truth. Man's goodness is the best sug-

gestion and the strongest argument there is for a Being of eternal goodness. It is not by chance that every great religion in the world which has led men to a higher way of life, has had its source in some commanding human character. We often speak of Jesus, using words which he himself employed, as "the way, the truth, and the life." We remember, too, the kindred declaration, "No man cometh to the Father but by me." And the underlying truth of both the statements is not limited to any single individual. The paths which lead to God are many; but none is more direct than that which leads through virtue.

Moreover, it is when we struggle to be just and true, when we make some deep resolve to be more generous and helpful, and feel the power in us of some true and

high example of a noble self-control, — it is then that love springs up and takes possession of us, and we feel the great impelling force of Power in the world of which we only know in part the meaning.

One of the most significant, and, after his early life, one of the most successful efforts for moral perfection was that which was tried by Benjamin Franklin. He wished, he wrote,[1] "to live without committing any fault at any time." And so he drew up for himself a list of virtues, which he was to school himself into embodying in his life. His scheme was to fix his whole attention on one virtue at a time, and when he had completely mastered that, to pass on to the next, and so on till his character was shaped, and his virtues

[1] *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, chap. vi.

thoroughly established. Moreover, the virtues were so arranged in order that, when he had acquired the first, the second would follow from it naturally. Thus the path of duty came to be continually smoother and more easy, and the discipline of effort less severe. "I never arrived at the perfection I had been ambitious of obtaining," he wrote years afterwards, "but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavour, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been, if I had not attempted it." What others thought of the result may best be judged from the fact that when he went to France, on his most important mission, with all it meant for liberty at home, it was said that "his virtues and renown negotiated for him."

Then, too, there is this that must not

be forgotten. Human character after all is a matter very largely of distinct and separate virtues. As there are some people whose "morality is all sympathy," or tender pity, so there are those whose strength of character is all or mostly purity, or self-restraint, or calm endurance, or radiant cheerfulness, or conscious and austere uprightness. In almost all our lives there is one particular quality, more marked than all the rest, which gives the tone and color to our moral nature. Even the best of men and women have not all the virtues in an equal portion. But by strengthening and perfecting one, we often tend to strengthen and perfect the others.

Such thoughts as these, however, have a merely technical importance. Here are these great and historic virtues, — these noble moral qualities which from one

age to another have found a glorious embodiment, in varying degrees of fullness, in the lives of men and women, — and they need no outward temples to be erected in their honor, for in themselves they constitute a temple of the living God. In speaking of great virtues we are not dealing with a *moral* subject only, we are dealing with *religion*. We do not confine ourselves to thoughts of man alone; but we find ourselves inevitably brought to think of God! Though we move among the things of earth, the glories and the mystery of heaven arch and open round us!

In the first place, it is true, as all of us know well, that religion ever tends to find its truest and its best embodiment in goodness. When faith attains its highest, and is given fullest utterance, it speaks

the language of the virtues. "The progress of religion," said Emerson, "is steadily to its identity with morals. One pulsation of virtue can uplift and vivify a whole popedom of forms," and "In the sublimest flights of the soul rectitude is never surmounted, love is never outgrown." But religious faith is constantly in danger of wandering off and losing itself in rituals and creeds and ceremonies, or in doctrines and beliefs and mere emotions, and the glow of empty, unembodied sentiment. And always it becomes restored by an emphasis upon the virtues of life, and their all-sufficient power. When prayers and postures and the right interpretations of beliefs — all of which are good, and have their place — become considered more than qualities of soul and attributes of character, the Prophet speaks

again, and says, "Bring no more vain oblations, your incense is an abomination unto me; when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Wash you, and make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, and learn to do well. For what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." That is to say, the highest point in all religions which the world has known, or ever can arrive at, is the point of glad and reverent obedience to the Lord's commands.

If that is the first great truth in regard to virtue as a temple, the second is like it, only grander, namely this: that, as religion tends forever in its progress to identity with virtue, so the life of virtue

ever acts to lift and exalt us till we breathe at last the higher and more stimulating atmosphere of faith itself. Religion, said Matthew Arnold, in words which often have been quoted, — "Religion is morality touched with emotion." And the special emotion that he had in mind, no doubt, was that which comes from the thought of God. Religion, therefore, we may better say, is the life of goodness conscious of its source; it is the sentiment of virtue seen and felt against the background of eternal law.

However that may be, it is surely true, as for all time has been clearly and reverently pointed out,[1] that "a secret, sweet, and overpowering beauty appears to man when his mind and heart open to the sentiment of virtue. Then he is instructed

[1] Emerson, *Works*, vol. i, pp. 120, 121.

in what is above him. He learns that his being is without bound, that to the good, to the perfect, he is born, low as he now lies in evil and weakness. That which he venerates is still his own, though he has not realized it yet. *He ought.* He knows the sense of that grand word, though his analysis fails to render an account of it. . . . The sentiment of virtue is a reverence and delight in the presence of certain divine laws." But "these laws refuse to be adequately stated, . . . they elude our persevering thought."

The life of virtue, that is to say, does not find fulfillment in itself alone. It does not set all questionings at rest; but rather rouses in us wonder and amazement. Virtue is an open window in the human soul; and when we go to it, and look out, the light that falls upon us is a light that

comes from central sun and clustered constellations. The moral law forever deals in possibilities, — the possibilities that lie within us as well as those which lie without. The touch of duty wakes the sleeping, unused powers in the human soul, and the soul itself in going forth to action lifts up an astonished face and asks the whence of these commands. The strength to do in life is attended often by a wonder as to how the strength is given. A law suggests a law-giver, and when we yield ourselves obedient we often feel the presence of a higher Will. Then only does the life of duty find completion, and the soul attain its rest.

"Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine."

The life of virtue, therefore, is not a mighty, independent continent in life's

great world, — unrelated and sufficient in itself, with adequate resources for the meeting of all needs. It rather is a little island, as a famous writer has suggested,[1] and the tides and waves of the eternal deep forever beat upon its shores. The single virtues in their full development often bring to man a sense of things which still are unattained, and he longs for fuller knowledge. Through them he climbs up till he feels the airs of heaven blowing o'er him, and looks far off to where the line of sea and sky is one. We begin by cultivating courage, purity, or magnanimity, or a noble self-control. We see their rich embodiment in others. And, lo! as we admire and pursue, we find new vistas of life's glory opening out before us, and

[1] James Martineau, *A Study of Religion*, vol. i, p. 23.

the human quality becomes an attribute of the divine.

It was long ago, as we have seen, that certain virtues in this world were looked upon and spoken of as cardinal. They were those which served, that is, as hinges in the life of goodness. But the hinges even more are those on which the mighty door of religious trust and spiritual faith is swung. As the door is opened, and we move in silence onward, and enter the great space which lies beyond, we find ourselves within the mystery and silence of a stately temple. Beyond the portal, and beneath the shadow of the giant arches, we look to where the lights are burning dimly, and the incense floats aloft. It is the holy of holies: the high altar of religious faith, and before it we have bent the knee.

II

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. — REVELATION, iii, 12.

If one man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors. — BUDDHA'S *Dhammapada*, or *Path of Virtue*, viii, 103.

THE PILLAR OF SELF-CONTROL

HAVING taken thought of the temple of virtue we go on to consider one of the columns or pillars in the temple by which the very life of goodness is supported and adorned. The quality that I have chosen first, because of its central position and its great importance, is the one which is hinted at in a verse from the book of Revelation: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." And to the question, Overcometh what? we may find the answer in a saying of the Buddha's, that he who "conquers himself is the greatest of all conquerors." "For not even a god," the ancient prophet goes on to declare, "could change into defeat the victory of a man who has vanquished

himself, and always lives under restraint."

Among the four great virtues which were early looked upon as cardinal, there was none on which more constant emphasis was laid than that of temperance. Temperance, however, is only one expression of the greater fact or quality of self-control. In former times the two terms were used more or less interchangeably. By temperance was meant the general control of the lower impulses, or powers, by the higher. It signified that "force of will" by which the various and conflicting instincts and desires of the human creature were "kept in their own places, and compelled to do their proper work." Of recent years, however, the term has come to have a distinctly narrower meaning. The exigencies of a great

reform have led us to think of the "temperate" person as the one who controls successfully one single appetite alone. And, virtuous though this may be, and needing still to be given emphasis, it is rather of the larger, more inclusive quality that we all may think with greatest helpfulness and value. It is he who overcomes his lower self as a whole, and exercises general and far-reaching self-control, who is made a pillar in the temple of his God.

Now, if the first great word of Greek philosophy was the word of Socrates, "Man, know thyself!" the second was the word of Plato, "Man, control thyself!" The human soul, said Plato, in one of his most famous passages, "is divided into three parts, two of them resembling horses, or winged steeds, and the third a charioteer." And of these horses which draw the

chariot of the soul, one, he found, was "generous, and of generous breed," and ever ready to mount upward, and to bear life through a bright and heavenly course. But the other was of opposite tendencies, and plunged persistently downward, wishing forever to descend. And hence it followed that the driving of the chariot of life was in no sense an easy and agreeable task. "By reason of awkwardness, or lack of having life's horses well in hand, many souls are marred and ruined, and many go away without being blessed by admission to the spectacle of truth."

From those far days to these there has never been the slightest question of the primary importance and the underlying necessity in life of exercising self-control. When Benjamin Franklin drew up for himself his scheme of "Moral Perfec-

tion," as he called it, to which a reference already has been made, he made a list of thirteen virtues which he hoped to incorporate in his character. That he failed to attain to some of these virtues, he told the world with his native honesty and frankness; but such failure does not of necessity detract from the interest and value of the great attempt. However that may be, it is significant and helpful to remember that the virtue Franklin set down first as most important and underlying all the rest, while also leading up to them, was temperance. "Temperance is first," he wrote,[1] "as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head which are so necessary where constant vigilance is to be kept up, and a guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of

[1] *Autobiography*, chapter vi.

ancient habits and the force of perpetual temptation."

And surely all of us, no matter what our special characters may be, nor what our dispositions, weaknesses, temptations, if we cast but a casual and hasty glance within, are obliged to say the same. Yes, temperance, or self-control, is first and most important. Before we can *achieve* anything, *become* anything, *be* anything that is really best and worthiest, we must learn the secret, and work out the discipline and power of a firm and steady rulership within ourselves.

Nor is this an easy or a short-lived task. Few of us have gone far on life's voyage in this ship of the human soul before we learn the turbulent and pirate nature of the crew we have to deal with.[1] Many

[1] W. E. C. Newbolt, *The Cardinal Virtues*, page 15.

appetites and impulses and tendencies are with us possibly which sailed in previous generations with those who gave them too great license. No sooner, therefore, have we left the quiet harbor of our early youth, and begun to feel the breezes and the billows of the world's great deep, than these impulses and passions seek to wrest away the office of command, and to gain a permanent control. And often there is nothing we can do but nail the hatches firmly down, and keep these riotous desires below the decks, while we stand securely at the wheel, in days of calm and nights of storm, our eye upon the needle of God's clear commands. What many of these instincts and desires are, we all know well, and we need not name them in detail. But this stands written for us clearly in the long and varied history of human naviga-

tion: that nothing is the cause of so much wreckage and disaster on the sea of life as the failure to control one's impulses and keep them in their proper place. An unruly temper, a vindictive spirit, unbridled jealousy, a lust of power or of pleasure, or of selfish gain which is left unleashed or made more dangerous by self-indulgence, — these are the things that in all the ages of the world have led to sudden wreck of reputation, to outward failure and disaster. In some unguarded moment the deed is done, the word is spoken, the rash and foolish impulse is permitted to prevail, which deprives us of the confidence of others, which causes us to lose our friends, which undoes the work of years. Because we have not conquered ourselves, we are conquered and humiliated by a portion only of our inmost natures, and the

whole must pay the penalty inflicted by a part.

An important point to think of, though, is this, — that what we call the lower impulses and tendencies of life are not the only ones which need to be restrained and subjected to a careful rule. There are qualities and attributes like ambition and enthusiasm and a conscious pride, which are helpful and of value in their place, but which may easily exceed all proper bounds, and lead life on to failure and mishap. The very craving to succeed and win, which helps a man attain positions of great trust and power, may also lead him on too fast and far, until the very impulse which at first exalted him now drags him down to ruin and disaster. Thus it was in the case of such mighty world-conquerors as Alexander and Napoleon. The self-same

impulses and mental qualities which contributed at first to their successes, because allowed to reach too far and exceed all reasonable bounds at length entailed their failure and their fall. Had those consummate victors exercised a more complete command over themselves, they would have held the kingdoms of the world much longer underneath their feet.

This principle is even true of the tenderest and fairest desires in the garden of the heart and soul. If these flowers are not tended constantly and kept in careful limits, they speedily run wild, and incline to coarseness or to weak and feeble growth. Thus sentiment runs off into all the folly and the feebleness of sentimentality, and sympathy, when left without the guiding hand of reason, becomes a helpless, ineffective impulse, and even goodness loses

half its power to attract and influence. This law of life, in other words, is written for us everywhere, — that in order, symmetry, and right proportion, and a careful, just arrangement and restraint of life, there is greatest power to be found, as well as safety to be gained.

Moreover, this is true, I think: that the area, — if I may call it that, — the area of self-control is extending all the time. The kingdom of selfhood is very happily, under ordinary conditions, a less unruly kingdom nowadays than ever in the past. The discipline of the ages has begun to tell. We have fewer violent and turbulent passions to hold in subjection to the will than rose rebellious in the days of old. But, on the other hand, the kingdom if more peaceful is much larger, and calls for greater care if we would rule it well.

Take the leisure, take the growing luxuries, take the abundant opportunities, take the enormous wealth, take the striking increase in the number of the avenues of pleasure and diversion in these modern days, and then take such things as social and political and religious freedom, and what are they all, if not, besides so many blessings when used aright and well, so many things to be controlled, to be brought into right and definite subjection to the individual will and conscience? And what is the trouble with many people at the present time? What is the cause of the idle, listless, useless, wasteful lives they feebly spend, if not distinctly this, — that they do not control, but are held in subjection by, some one or many of these modern and abundant possibilities and opportunities? They have not earned

them; in many cases they do not deserve them, and in others still they foolishly misuse and waste them.

We remember the story of the youthful Phaethon, how he begged to be allowed to drive across the sky his father's chariot of the sun. But the giant horses, which the father held in firm control, the young and inexperienced boy was utterly incapable of guiding. He could not hold them to their appointed course. The youth himself was hurled off to destruction, and the world was made to suffer by his wild career. And what is that but a graphic picture of much which goes on in the modern world each year, with its golden chariots of princely fortunes? The father, who has slowly made his fortune, and not without his losses, possibly, and hardships and discouragements, understands

its value, and controls it with a wise and generous use. But the son, who takes in confidence the reins, is often hurried from the path of usefulness and honor, and drawn by reason of his lack of self-control into dangerous and vicious ways.

I spoke a moment since, however, of the extended area of selfhood which needs to be subjected to a careful and consistent system of control. We may wisely go on, therefore, to elaborate that thought, and give it practical bearing on the needs of daily life. For the most part, we think of self-control as having to do with little else than the stronger and more vehement impulses of human nature, with such things as I have spoken of, or hinted at, — with anger, lust, ambition, cruel and vindictive feelings. And this, of course, is well. But I wish to point out some of its

deeper and more subtle bearings. There are outlying and partially deserted districts in the natures of us all, which need to be included in the limits of the kingdom and to share the blessings of both law and order.

First of all, there is the district in the mysterious land of selfhood that is occupied by our moods. It appears to me that over this each one of us may exercise a useful, if not an easy, system of control. All of us, that is to say, have our alternating periods of sunshine and of storm, of cheerfulness and depression, of energy and relaxation, of faith and doubt, of hope and despair, of confidence and weak uncertainty. Now we are lifted into conscious joy and throbbing hope; but again we feel ourselves forlorn and desolate. Life to-day appears a privilege and radiant

opportunity for usefulness: to-morrow we seriously wonder if anything is really much worth while.

So there are times when our work, our duties, our drudgeries even, are done easily and gladly. Instead of finding them burdensome we rejoice in the various cares and responsibilities which fill the hours of each day so full. But then, again, deep gloom oppresses us, and we can neither seem to do nor be our best. And all such moods are natural. They come upon nearly all of us. Very few people can hope to live in such divinely ordered latitudes of soul that their sky is always clear. We cannot, therefore, put an absolute end to these various and changeable conditions. But we can and should control them. Little by little we may learn by very commonplace experience that the

gloom and the depression need not cause us genuine despair. However dark the curtain of the cloud may hang, the blue sky is behind it still. Night falls, and yet the stars shine out.

All of us may work out for ourselves a very practical and helpful philosophy in this respect, and we ought to work it out, and discipline ourselves to live by it as well. When the soul is feeble to believe; when we feel ourselves indifferent to the good and true; when things seem burdensome, and life appears a giant load of care, — it is possible to remind ourselves that we have been along that very road before, and have watched the leaden darkness of those same great clouds, and yet beyond them we have come out into sunlight and have been refreshed. We must have our discouragements, indeed;

but we need not, therefore, be utterly cast down. We may despond, but we need not feel despair.

Much the same may be said of that neighboring territory of the mind which belongs to worry. We all have times of apprehending possible ills. We stand in dread of things which never happen. We picture to ourselves the very worst. We "borrow trouble," as the saying is, and the rate of interest we pay is very high.

Now we cannot altogether free the mind from tendencies like these. They are part of the general forward-looking powers God has given us, and they have decided use when properly employed. We can control them, though; and we ought to learn to do so with a fair amount of true success. We should be men enough, or women enough, to exercise a careful

supervision over thoughts and fears, and idle, needless apprehensions. If we have not learned to overcome anxieties, which spring up freely just because they have no depth of soil, even as we overcome base impulses and low desires, we have not learned a chief among the earliest lessons of all life.

Then, too, in addition to the worries and the moods of life, there is the larger and the darker realm of grief and sorrow. We cannot hope, of course, to free our minds of sadness. There are many things which come inevitably to us all, and cause us to experience trouble and affliction. In proportion as we love, we are often called upon to grieve, and the depth of feeling and the height to which our hopes ascend extend the regions in our lives which become exposed to sorrows and to

disappointment. But what we cannot banish or bar out, we can come, at least in large part, to control. We need not weakly yield ourselves nor give way utterly to sorrows, no matter what their crushing force may be. There is no more noble mastery of self than that which meets with trust and self-contained repose the hardships and the heavy losses of the world.

Such is the breadth, and such, in some sense, is the height of true and worthy self-control. Whoso is really master of himself, the conqueror and king of inner impulse and of disposition, becomes exalted, and yet truly humble; bound, and yet forever free; restrained, and yet distinctly active. And, as this is the first necessity at life's beginning, so it is the last attainment that we all should strive

to bring about in fullness. It is the subtle girdle which alone makes possible the simplest virtues and redeems the life from utter lawlessness; and it is the gleaming band of spiritual light which crowns the highest efforts of all those who yield neither to outward failure nor to inner foe.

A self-control like this, however, is a far and high ideal which is not to be attained at once nor reached with ease. With most of us the way must be a long one, and the rate of progress slow. In the "Divine Comedy," when Virgil left Dante on the outer circle of the earthly paradise, he bade him use henceforth his own will and be master of his own actions. "Wherefore," he said, "thee over thyself I crown and mitre."[1] But before that blessed end

[1] *Purgatorio*, canto xxviii.

was reached there had been the wandering and the painful passage through the regions of despair and those of purging pain and trial.

With self-control, however, when we gain it for ourselves to any full degree, certain qualities become our portion, which lend to life exceeding dignity and richness. The first of these is moral quietness or peace. Not the selfish and the artificial peace that comes from solitude and calm retirement from troubles and contentions, but that peace of mind which is freed from self-reproaches and regrets. For many of us in this world are anxious and disturbed by reason of the blunders we have made, the wrongs we have committed, the injustice we have done in some impetuous moment when we forgot ourselves, or yielded to the mood of self-

ishness or indolence that passed across our minds. But those who once have conquered well themselves are least disturbed in ways like these. The balance of their lives does much to make their progress smooth.

And if peace is the first thing that is born of self-control, the second thing is power. Not the power which is gathered up in selfish might, and strength to do as one desires; but the power which goes forth to influence and help. No man is fitted to command others who does not first command and rule himself; and, as a matter of daily knowledge, no one actually does command respect or become a strong example in the way of virtue until he exercises self-control. But, on the other hand, how true it is that we yield ourselves obedient, in a greater or a less degree, to

those who manifestly are the quiet, restful masters of themselves! Who are they that shame us for our weaknesses, short comings, and defects? that fill us with a great desire and impetuous longing to put temptations underneath our feet and rise superior to idle hopes and earth-born fears? Who, if not the men and women who have fought the battle with themselves, and conquered; who have overcome, and stand as pillars of endurance, loyalty, and patience in the mighty temple of the restless world. There is nothing in the realm of virtue more contagious than the living evidence of vigor exercised in calm restraint, and energy that is held subservient to moral purpose and endeavor.

And then to peace and power must be added firmness, — the capacity to persist in the things we undertake, and to

stand unmoved and resolute in defense of what is right. A great deal of the instability of life, with its weak, ephemeral, and abortive efforts after what is good and worthy, is due to the fact that people yield themselves to merely passing impulses. They are carried away by excess of sudden feeling, and later on they have to face about, and beat a quick retreat. The person who is king and ruler over self, however, is not the easy prey of wandering emotions and desires. He understands himself, and what he does he does with resolution and conviction, and when he stands he is erect and firm.

To these great qualities one other must be added, — that of beauty; for when they are combined in human character they give an impression of wholeness and of self-contained completeness. The ele-

ment of harmony, however, of symmetry, of fair and full proportion, is an underlying element in all the genuine beauty of the world. And greater, possibly, than the splendor of courage, and the chaste simplicity of justice, and the tender loveliness of sympathy, is the rounded grace and full perfection of a free and restful self-control.

Peace and power, firmness and beauty, therefore, — these are the impressive features in the life of the greatest of all conquerors, who has triumphed over self. These are the elements of victory that adorn the life of one who, having overcome, is made a pillar in the temple of our God.

III

And thus this man died, leaving his death for an example of a noble courage, and a memorial of virtue, not only unto young men, but unto all his nation. — 2 Maccabees, vi, 31.

THE PILLAR OF COURAGE

THE pillar of courage holds an important and conspicuous place in the temple of virtue. For virtue, manhood, courage, were originally all one word, and stood for the same great quality in human life. That is to say, our word virtue is derived from the Latin *vir*, and the Aryan *wira*, the meaning of which is a man or hero. In other words, among the ancient Romans, as among the early peoples generally, to be a man meant being brave, and hardy, and heroic.

Courage, therefore, is the oldest of the virtues. It is regal in its ancestry, whatever may be said regarding its intrinsic worth. It was the first of all the moral qualities to be widely recognized and defi-

nitely honored. Before the human race had learned the value of honesty, or the power of justice, or the dignity of prudence, and long before people had come to see the beauty of sympathy, of kindness, or of self-control, the importance of manliness was clearly understood, and courage was distinctly honored and exalted. It has the pulse-beat of battle in it, and the thrill of patriotic effort, and the pathos of self-sacrifice. It is clothed in all the glory of the ancient Sagas, and it marches down the centuries to the sounding music of the epics of all lands. When we think of it we think of men who have dared all for the right, and endured all for the true, and of women who "received their dead by a resurrection, and were tortured, not accepting their deliverance."

By courage, perhaps, as much as by the

quality of faith, "the elders obtained a good report." For what shall we say "of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets?" Surely these were all courageous men. Moreover, the time would fail us, as it failed the early Christian writer, if we undertook to tell of those who by reason of their glowing courage "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in the fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." The history of the human race might almost be called a history of courage. At least, without this quality no continents would ever have been tamed, no oceans crossed,

no social changes or political reforms suggested or secured. It follows, therefore, that our admiration of courage, and the natural and instinctive love we feel for brave and heroic deeds, have been inherited directly from the most distant of our sturdy though barbaric ancestors.

The disposition at the present time undoubtedly exists, however, and of recent years it has been developed and encouraged, to minimize the excellence of courage, and to throw suspicion on its moral value. It is spoken of somewhat lightly, on occasions, in an age which is learning happily to disapprove of war, and when one influence after another is being brought beneath the sway of conscience and the spiritual life. Not long ago I spoke to a well-known clergyman about a sermon he had lately preached

with peculiar boldness and directness on some public topic of importance. I said to him, "It was a very courageous utterance." "Oh," he answered, with a laugh, "courage is the cheapest of the virtues." And he was one perhaps who ought to know, for he never seems to understand the meaning of the thing called fear.

Still more pronounced in this respect was the sentiment of Channing, who likewise had the courage of his great convictions, and a vast amount to spare besides. Yet courage to this famous prophet, who boldly spoke the most unwelcome truths, and at least on one occasion calmly faced the fury of a surging mob, — courage seemed a most uncertain trait of character, and scarcely worthy to be classed among the virtues. In his famous

sermon upon "War" [1] he declared it "a very doubtful quality, springing from very different sources, and possessing a corresponding variety of character. Courage," he said, "sometimes results from mental weakness . . . and still more frequently springs from physical temperament, from a rigid fibre and iron nerves, and deserves as little praise as the proportion of the form or the beauty of the countenance. . . . Every passion which is strong enough to overcome the passion of fear, and to exclude by its vehemence the idea of danger, communicates at least a temporary courage. Thus revenge, when it burns with great fury, gives a terrible energy to the mind, and has sometimes impelled men to meet certain

[1] W. E. Channing, *Works*, one-volume edition, pp. 650, 658.

death that they might inflict the same fate on an enemy. You see, therefore," was the word of Channing, "the doubtful nature of courage. It is often associated with the worst vices. The most wonderful examples of it may be found in the history of pirates and robbers. . . . Indeed," this prophet and moral teacher went on to declare, "though courage is of worth, and ought to be prized, sought, and cherished, it is not of itself virtuous. It is an aid to virtue. All great enterprises demand it, and without it virtue cannot rise into magnanimity." But "considered in itself, or without reference to its origin and motives, and regarded in its common manifestations, it *is not a virtue*, is not moral excellence, and the disposition to exalt it above the spirit of Christianity is one of the most ruinous delusions

which have been transmitted to us from barbarous times."

Now, interesting as all this is, more especially when account is taken of its source, it is yet in some sense meretricious and mistaken. To a certain extent we might argue thus in regard to nearly all the virtues. It is not necessary to be honest and unselfish in order to act at times with a noble courage, any more than it is necessary to be pure and temperate before we can be loving and tender. The fact that the generous person is sometimes weak, and occasionally self-complacent, does not justify us in declaring that generosity is not a lovely and ennobling moral grace. It is a well-known and long-established fact, which is given illustration all around us every day, that the vicious and degraded people of the

world assist each other in times of trial and misfortune to an extent of actual self-sacrifice that respectable and upright people are seldom seen to do in their unselfishness and sympathy. Yet that does not discredit helpfulness, nor diminish in the least its moral and spiritual value. Courage, therefore, for the simple reason that it often lives in company with doubtful and ignoble traits, can hardly be, I think, on that account, denied a place among the virtues.

And yet, in saying this, we have not fully answered the objections that were raised. We are still in a dilemma. For here, upon the one hand, is a moral teacher telling us that courage is the cheapest of the virtues; and there, upon the other, is a greater and more famous teacher saying that to be courageous in

the ordinary sense is not virtuous at all. What, then, is the meaning of these strictures? And what the actual moral value of this mighty and heroic quality of life?

We must begin, I think, by recognizing that there are various gradations, and widely separated phases, in the manifestations of this familiar and historic attribute. Courage is not always of the same kind. Moreover it differs very particularly from the other virtues in not being inherently or necessarily worthy, or beautiful, or even of moral value. "If courage were intrinsically virtuous," says a writer, "we should have to call a man good because he met a tiger unflinchingly when he was simply engaged in sport; whereas no one would think such an act had any moral quality." [1] Thus, too, there is

[1] Quoted by S. E. Mezes, *Ethics*, p. 216.

a courage which is dull and blind and stupid, which exists because dangers are not clearly seen when they exist, or are underestimated when they are really very great. And in this there is nothing either to be praised or imitated. God gives us senses that we may see and understand, and among other things that we may recognize and take account of dangers. The person who is unintelligent in this respect, who does not know enough to be afraid at times, is not courageous, he is reckless. The reckless person, therefore, stands at one end of the scale, with the coward at the other. Cowardice often comes from picturing dangers where they do not really exist, or from thinking of them as greater than they actually are: while recklessness is born of an incapacity to reckon or to heed them when they are really great.

Much the same must be said, too, of a courage that is clearly useless, and which serves no definite or worthy end. We have a special word for this which is most expressive. The person who throws away his life, or puts it in serious jeopardy out of curiosity, or love of excitement, or mere bravado, is not courageous, he is *foolhardy*. That is to say, he is unintelligent and injudicious.

A recent writer in one of our magazines gave an historic instance of a case of this sort. He called it an example of "Wasted Courage." It is an incident in the career of William Prince of Orange, afterwards King William III of England, one of the ablest generals of his time and a man of high personal courage. I will quote what the writer says:[1]

[1] *The Outlook*, Aug. 3, 1901.

"On one occasion on a battlefield in Flanders when, under a heavy fire of bullets, [William] was giving orders to the members of his staff, he discovered near him the deputy governor of the Bank of England, drawn to the place by mere curiosity. The king said to him sharply, 'Sir, you ought not to run these hazards; you are not a soldier, — you are of no use to us here.' 'I run no more hazard than your majesty,' the man answered. 'Not so,' said the king; 'I am here where it is my duty to be, and I may without presumption commit my life to God's keeping, but you —' The sentence was left incomplete because the man fell dead at the king's feet. It was a foolish courage and it cost a life. No good end was served; the man gambled with that which did not belong to him

and lost it by a throw of the iron dice of war."

Now had William himself been shot there his death would have been heroic, — an evidence of splendid courage and devotion; but, as it was, mere recklessness had been displayed, and the banker's death was an example neither of courage nor of virtue.

While courage, therefore, may exist in one sense, but in less degree, in those who recognize no dangers, and thus feel no fears, it is noble and admirable only when dangers are perceived and fears controlled; and it is a virtue only when they are encountered and controlled in a worthy cause, with some high and good intent.

But we need not linger over thoughts like these. The value of courage may be

clearly perceived by comparing it with cowardice. For, while cowardice may often render a whole life and character contemptible, robbing almost every other virtue of its power and beauty, courage is a glowing and resplendent mantle. It sometimes wraps the entire life around, and redeems in glory what is even weak and faulty. If a person is courageous, if he gives his life for a noble cause, if he counts as nothing ease and happiness and love, and flings them all into the balance as he bravely does his duty, we forgive him many failings and shortcomings for the sake of his one great virtue. Courage, therefore, is like charity in this respect, — that it often covers a multitude of sins.

There are three things that we may go on to consider. First, there is the develop-

ment and discipline in life of this shining and conspicuous quality. Second, there is the field of life in which it best, and with greatest usefulness, may be displayed; and third, there is the secret of its highest reaches and sublimest manifestations.

1. So far as the development of courage is concerned it is clear enough, when once we view the matter properly, that quite as much as in the case of any of the virtues, here is a quality to be cultivated, and oftentimes acquired. We speak of *natural* courage, to be sure, more frequently perhaps than we speak of natural honesty or kindness; but, on the other hand, the greatest courage in the world is not of this easy and unconscious kind. The greatest and most worthy courage does not consist in the absence of fears; it comes

from the control of fears. The Duke of Wellington once said that "men of natural courage did not make the best soldiers; but those who, shrinking from the conflict, did not flinch because their sense of duty held them to the task." [1] And this is borne out by the testimony of individual men whom people have admired for their bravery. They often have confessed with frankness in their later years that they were weak, and almost overcome with fear, when first they found themselves brought face to face with mortal peril.

Moreover, nothing in the world, perhaps, is a matter of discipline and habit more than courage. People are brave in facing dangers they have grown accus-

[1] Quoted by J. W. Chadwick, *William Ellery Channing*, p. 293.

tomed to, and which they have trained the will to meet; but the most courageous men have wavered, and been known to pale, before a peril which was new and strange to them. Oliver Cromwell was the most unflinching, possibly, of all the famous Ironsides he led so often into battle. Yet this great man, who had been so valiant to withstand the visible foe, trembled weakly at the thought of the assassin's knife. He was not accustomed to a danger that he could not see.

A curious case of a similar nature was that of Admiral Nelson. Upon the cruiser's deck he was utterly intrepid, and no danger could upset him. But Nelson once was taken by a friend to drive along the peaceful country lanes of England, and the freshness of the horses so alarmed him that he could

not suppress his fears. He begged to be set down, frankly confessing his alarm, and, refusing all assurances of safety, he insisted on walking the entire distance home.

This is a phase of life which has been clearly recognized since early times. Few men, for instance, faced death so constantly as the gladiators in the ancient arenas. They were looked upon as the bravest of the brave, and when death came their way they met their fate without a groan upon the gleaming sands their blood had reddened. In the days of degenerate Rome the experiment was made of using these gladiators in the army. They were enrolled in the legions, and sent to the front, where it was thought that they would serve with signal valor. To the surprise of all, however, they were

ineffective in the ranks, and proved no match in courage for the ordinary soldier.[1]

And so it is, no less, in the round of the nobler and more peaceful pursuits of the present time. The sailor who is cheerful and smiling in the midst of the storm at sea, the engineer who runs his train through the gloom and darkness of the heavy night, might tremble at the thought of descending with the miner into the grim depths of the silent earth, or hesitate to venture with the Alpine climber up the sheer sides of the lofty Matterhorn or Monte Rosa. And it would not of necessity be cowardly to do so. The miner, on the other hand, who had never been to sea, might blanch before the tumult of the waters, while the mountaineer, with no

[1] W. E. H. Lecky, *The Map of Life*, p. 250.

experience of railways, might pray in terror to be set down from the "through express" and given the security of native cliffs and peaks.

Courage, therefore, is "a habit of the will." It is a thing that often must be learned and acquired slowly as we grow accustomed to the hazardous and gain the right and full control of fears. Among the many things that are remembered still of Abraham Lincoln is the leniency he practiced during the civil war with cases of cowardice and desertion. He called them his "leg cases," and pardoned nearly all of them. "They are the cases," he said to some one, "that you call by that long name of 'cowardice in the face of the enemy;' but I call them my leg cases. For if God Almighty has given a man a cowardly pair of legs, how can they

help running away with him?" [1] In other words, he recognized in the largeness of his nature, more clearly far than most have done, that the man who begins by shrinking from an unaccustomed danger, may yet be disciplined into steadfast valor. Thus it was with the famous and intrepid Henry of Navarre. In his first campaign he literally dragged his cowering body forward towards the foe, and his comrades heard him talking to himself, and vowing that he would not yield to fear. Yet Henry lived to make his crest become a "guiding star," and

"Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre."

2. It being true, as we have seen, that courage often comes by practice; that it is

[1] Norman Hapgood, *Abraham Lincoln, the Man of the People*, p. 300.

a matter of discipline, and self-control, — a habit even which some of the most heroic people in the course of history have acquired only along certain lines, — we go on to consider how it is a quality that needs especially to be developed for the true and proper living of our daily lives, and the right performance of our ordinary duties. *Here*, where each of us is living just the customary life of a man or woman; *now*, in these prosperous and peaceful times, is the place and period for bravery and fortitude to be both used and shown. For there is a courageous, even as there is a most heroic way, of bearing burdens, meeting hardships, facing failures, overcoming armies of temptations and putting them to hurried and confusing flight. A man is a hero or a dastard, a woman is brave and fearless, or weak and

timorous, most of all according to the manner and the spirit in which they fight this battle of life and confront its varied dangers. How many occasions there are in the life of every day, how many sudden crises — or, if we may hardly call them that, how many situations or dilemmas — in which it takes courage to speak the right word, to evince the proper and the called-for disapproval, to do the noble or the generous deed. And, if we are not prepared, if we are weak and indifferent, if we are cowardly at heart, the right word does not come from us, we let the slander go unanswered, and the vulgar or dishonest act is allowed to pass without our challenge. It takes courage—and courage is needed in this modern world and it is surely virtuous—to withstand and openly oppose many of the customs in the fa-

miliar sphere of business, and many of the practices of fashionable and so-called polite society, — to say, "No! I do not approve of that, and I will take no part in this!" There are certain practices which no amount of fashion can refine, and which no politeness can redeem. When people take a stand, however, against things like these they encounter ridicule; and ridicule is the sharpest and most trying weapon that any of us have to meet in this struggle which is known as modern life.

But not to be forgotten or ignored is the gleaming and ennobling courage of the men and women who stand in the trenches of sorrow and failures through long days and nights, and who fight down disappointments and misunderstandings. Most people, perhaps, can find the courage

necessary for some sudden crisis, — courage which will last, it may be, for a few short hours, through some sudden burst of energy; but it is far more difficult to live a whole life bravely, week after week, year after year, never to lose heart, and with no particular incentive to nerve us to our best. Yet there are thousands of people who do that, and never gain the credit of true courage. Emerson tells us that "he has not learned the lesson of life who does not every day suppress a fear." And how many and how truly varied are the daily issues in this world, which well may make us tremble, and which are rightly met with steadfast courage. The Romans called this special duty "fortitude." It was courage in the face of *fors*, or chance, or fate. And courage such as this is being shown by

people very grandly every day. Think of all the pains, the worries, and the cares of life! Think of the quick and awful reversals that often come in outward fortune! Think of the cruel fate that always seems to oppose the efforts many people make! Think of the ordinary losses, sorrows, and disasters of the world! And then think of the men and women who go forward calmly fighting things like these, and never showing the white flag of fear, — women who live down, and grandly rise above, their husbands' disgraces; who go out into the world unarmed, and calmly fight its battles; who struggle patiently to educate their children; who lay away in the grave their dearest treasures, and then turn with a smile of pity and a hand of encouragement to help the first unfortunate fellow-sufferer they meet! Who

of us does not know, or has not heard, of lives like these? — of people who are not embittered, but emboldened by misfortune; who do not sink, but soar because of the burdens which are laid upon them. If this is not courageous, and a virtue, then the words themselves had best be blotted out from life's vocabulary! And when we teach our children and young people truths like these; when we make them see that it is cowardice and weakness to be overcome by failures and embittered by life's losses, as much as when a soldier turns his back in battle; but that it is courageous and heroic to set a cheerful face and hold a steadfast front against life's troubles, — when we teach our children that, I say, then the same ambition that would make them conquer fear in hours of actual danger, will come to their

assistance in the path of every-day endurance.

People speak of *moral* courage very often, and surely it is well to do so. For the morality of many people, — their purity, their temperance, their generosity, their steadfastness to high ideals, — is almost all of it brave, and in the truest sense heroic. It has not come without a struggle; it has not been maintained without courageous effort. So men have had the strength and the endurance to live down and to leave behind a careless or indulgent past. Nor has it been accomplished without pain and effort, which sometimes has been met and borne with sturdy and unflinching resolution. Not long ago I heard a college president suggest in a somewhat laughing, yet a really serious vein, that he thought a "hero

medal" ought to be bestowed on every man and woman who, having reached the Psalmist's limit, has kept life clean and strong and hopeful, — who has never yielded to temptation in a serious way, or, having done so, has returned to virtue's path. For not without much brave endurance and courageous effort can we live as servants of the moral law.

3. In saying all of this, however, we have not touched as yet upon the inmost secret, and the glowing impulse of the highest and the purest courage in the world. Courage, we have seen, is not the absence of fears, but their control. It sometimes happens, though, that we ourselves do not exert the strong control so much as we have it silently and suddenly exerted on or through us. People are never so calmly and divinely brave in life

as when they are lifted up by some great cause, and lost to all their narrow, selfish thoughts in full devotion to some mighty truth and heavenly principle. And this in literal fact has been the secret of the courage of the greatest and the best the whole world over, as it also has inspired signally the artless and the weak. The mighty heroes of the world have not controlled their fears; they have lost all consciousness of fear. In their devotion to the cause they served; in their enthusiasm for the ends they sought, all thought of self has disappeared, and with it all concern for danger. Thus Luther went to Worms, no matter if opposing devils were as thick and red as tiles upon the housetops; and thus he stood alone before his host of foes, declaring that he could not have done otherwise.

"The best courages," said a Puritan trooper under Cromwell, "are but beams of the Almighty." [1] And no single beam from God has shone so fully in the hearts of men and women, or with such great power, as the beam of Love. It shines within the mother's heart, and makes her strong with courage from on high, to lose her life, if need be, to defend and save her offspring. For perfect love doth ever cast out fear. It glows within the minds of scholars as they seek with eagerness the truth and sends great shafts of brilliant flame across the hearts and souls of all who feel the mighty force of Ought; and they gladly and devoutly follow where it leads. We sometimes speak of the need there is that people should have the courage of their convictions. But if they really

[1] Emerson, *Works*, vol. vii, quoted pp. 33, 258.

have convictions, — or rather if convictions once have laid a mastering hold on them, — the courage follows as a matter of course.

What we need, therefore, you and I, amid the simplest of life's duties and the heaviest of its trials and the fiercest of its temptations and the darkest of its sorrows, — what we need to keep us brave and steadfast is the clear and firm assurance of something larger, higher than ourselves to which we owe allegiance. Let us only come to feel that God himself has need of us, — that he has given us this work to do, these tasks to carry through, that he has put us here within the ranks of life, and that the enemies we fight are *his* enemies as well, — let us only feel like that; let us lay firm hold upon some great and spiritual truth of life, and

then the strength we need is silently and yet abundantly supplied us.

The poet spoke in praise of one who gave —

> "His pure soul unto his captain Christ,
> Under whose colors he had fought so long."

And when we fight beneath the banners of that spiritual Captain; when we hear his high commands to do them; when his spirit comes to be the spirit of *our* lives as well, and we feel ourselves to be about the Father's business, — then shall we become indeed an "example of a noble courage," and leave behind us "a memorial of virtue."

IV

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. — PROVERBS, ix, 1.

I Wisdom dwell with prudence. — PROVERBS, viii, 12.

THE PILLAR OF PRUDENCE

THE early Hebrew writers were one with the philosophers of Greece in their praise of wisdom. Our Bible contains what are known as the "Wisdom Books," and there are no more beautiful descriptions in all its pages than those which tell about this spiritual quality. "For Wisdom," said one of the writers of the Apocrypha, "is more moving than any motion; she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness. For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his

goodness: and in all ages entering into holy souls she maketh them friends of God, and prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom."

With less poetic fervor, but with equal insistence, Plato spoke in praise of wisdom. For "excellencies or virtues," he said, "are of two kinds: there are human virtues, and there are divine virtues, and the human hang upon the divine; and wisdom is the chief and leader of the divine class of virtues."

In other words, wisdom stood first among the virtues which Plato set apart as cardinal. It is important to notice, however, that what we mean by wisdom, when we speak about it as a virtue, is really prudence. For prudence is practical wisdom, or wisdom which is applied to the ordinary affairs of life. That is to say, it

is the evidence that people give us in their every-day existence of being wise. Plato recognized this truth; for when, in the Republic, he undertook to describe the value of wisdom he found himself describing the prudent person. "The state," he wrote, "which we have described, is really wise, if I am not mistaken, inasmuch as it is prudent in counsel. And this very quality, prudence in counsel, is evidently a kind of knowledge, for it is not ignorance, but knowledge that makes men deliberate prudently." [1]

Hence it is that in the Bible the two are almost always spoken of together, — in the same breath as it were, — as though the one could not be understood without the other. "For I Wisdom dwell with prudence," wrote the Proverb-maker, and

[1] *The Republic*, book iv.

"the wise in heart shall be known as prudent." "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way," is another of his sayings. "By the strength of my hand I have done it," Isaiah makes the Lord of Hosts assert, "and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." But "the knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom," declared a later writer, "neither at any time is the counsel of sinners prudence." Jesus himself spoke about the truths which were hidden "from the wise and prudent;" but when Paul proclaimed the power of the Master whom he followed he announced that "he abounded in all wisdom and prudence."

It was wholly natural, therefore, that the Romans, who were a practical and downright people, loving things that could be used and understood, should have

made the change, and called this virtue prudence. It is of prudence, accordingly, that we next may take some thought, seeing what its place is, and what its supporting power, in this temple of the virtuous life.

In one of Albrecht Dürer's frescoes, which adorn the walls of a mediæval council-chamber in the gray old town of Nuremberg, a famous emperor, whom the painter wished to honor with his brush, is represented as making his triumphal progress down the ages in a golden chariot. This chariot is drawn by a number of horses, each of which is led by a special virtue. At the head of one horse courage walks with proud and sturdy step, at the head of another justice, and of still another generosity, and so on. In the chariot itself, however, side by side with the em-

peror, the figure may be seen of wisdom, or prudence, — and prudence holds the reins which check and guide the horses that are led by all the other virtues.

The arrangement doubtless was suggested to the artist by the special qualities or characteristics in the life and history of the man whom he sought thus to depict. Yet, nothing could suggest much better the rightful place that prudence holds among the other virtues. For it is not her function to lead the chariot of life, so much as it is to guide it. She does not originate so much as check. She is not concerned with eagerly hurrying life along, but rather with the endeavor quietly to hold it back. And this is certainly a very necessary function to perform. For, as self-control is needed to restrain and curb life's lower, dangerous, and wandering

impulses, and to keep them from leaping over proper bounds, so wisdom, or prudence, is essential to guide life's higher instincts and desires in the right and noble path. Courage, as we saw, may often lead life headlong into needless danger; and there easily may be a sympathy, or love, that is weak and even harmful, while we frequently behold some phase of generosity which is neither beautiful nor helpful because imprudent and unwise.

It is doubtless, though, for just this reason that prudence seems to many people unattractive. For I suppose that to many of us it really is a comparatively unattractive quality, or one at least that does not seem to waken in us admiration or enthusiasm. Prudence, when we look at it among the other pillars in life's temple, seems severely simple, plain, and un-

adorned. It has neither grace of line nor wealth of decoration. It may be useful, we declare; but it surely is not beautiful. Perhaps, indeed, there are those who would even feel inclined to raise some question of its value. For it clearly may be pointed out that many of the greatest victories and grandest achievements in the course of history, have come from blind and rash, impetuous and imprudent action. Men have flung themselves headlong into strife, they have run the most terrific risks, they have taken the most tremendous odds, they have seemed entirely heedless of the heavy chances that were against them; and, just because of this, they have won their victories, gained their successes, and worn their laurels, which on that account were all the more significant and brilliant.

I think that many of us have a special fondness for heroes of this very kind. They captivate our fancy, and call forth eager and spontaneous praise. Moreover, in the moral life, amid all the dangers and vicissitudes of existence, we seem to honor most the very ones who fling all prudence to the winds. The moral person, we even say, is the one who takes no account at all of what is safe; but only thinks of what is right; who does not question about probabilities or possibilities, but simply bends to obligation, whatever the self-sacrifice required. He does because he *ought*, irrespective utterly of what he would.

For this reason we associate prudence very often with caution and timidity. Emerson spoke of it, for example, as "the virtue of the senses," and said it was "content to seek health of body by com-

plying with physical conditions, and health of the mind by the laws of the intellect." There is a prudence, he added, "which adores the rule of three, which never subscribes, which never gives, which seldom lends, and asks but one question of every project: Will it bake bread?" [1]

And yet, while all of this is true, it must not be forgotten for one moment that there are higher reaches to this virtue, and larger phases of its full development, which lend to life exceeding dignity and power. While it is a fact, no doubt, that we admire people who take great chances, and are willing oftentimes to run grave risks, as a rule we do not care to give such people too much power, nor to have them take control of great affairs. Though we praise them when they happily succeed,

[1] Emerson, *Works*, vol. ii, pp. 210–211.

we severely blame them when they miserably fail, and we have small pity for their losses. The people whom we trust the most in business, whom we see selected every day to carry through important undertakings, are the ones who add to their honor wisdom, and to great ability good judgment, and a careful prudence.

Moreover, this is true, which is most significant: the really prudent person is the very one who often seems to the ignorant and uninformed to take grave chances, and to run great risks, when he is only acting by the light of higher knowledge. For prudence is the faculty of looking at things which lie before, — of "*providing*," as we say, and taking right account of what is yet to come. And he who does this well in life, who sees things clearly in their larger bearings and their

true perspective, will often do things which appear to blunter minds and lower faculties both bold and needless. He is really reaching on to something which is far above the heads and beyond the sight of ordinary people, and only time can prove to them that in acting as he did he was doing wisely and not rashly. Indeed, there are times when it is only prudent to be daring.

As we leave such introductory and merely preparatory thoughts as these, let me ask you to perceive the need that there is in daily life for such a quality as this. People often speak about the sins of the world, and the suffering that comes in consequence. But almost as tragic to my mind are the *blunders* of life, and the awful things which follow in their train. People all around us, day after day, are blaming

themselves not alone for the wrongs they have done, but for the mistakes which they have made. They have been foolish, blind, and stupid. They have lacked the grace of sound and saving sense. And it always must remain a question whether as much evil in this world, as much pain, as much serious and lasting harm, is not brought about by blindness and mere blundering, as is caused by conscious wickedness and deliberate perversity and evil-doing. It is not enough in this world to have good intentions, right desires, high ambitions, we must also have sound judgment, and the faculty of seeing things with clearness. The best intentions sometimes, and the purest longings, have led people into the most grievous wrongs and the gravest errors. Because they have not seen what they were doing, nor pondered

well the path in which their feet were led, they have gone on into pain, and loss, and sorrow. If we have not, therefore, in ourselves the wisdom that we need, the only prudent thing for us to do is to go to those who can impart it to us. All the wealth of rich experience the world has earned and won is laid up for us, to be drawn upon, and freely used, as we desire.

We proceed to consider with some care the characteristics of the person who is nobly and distinctly prudent. What, we ask, does the prudent person generally do? What are the traits of character which grow up round this central and important quality?

First of all the prudent person *counts*, as we may say, *the cost*. He takes account,—not in a weak and timorous way, but bravely, and because he wisely has

allowed experience to teach him, — he takes account of consequences. When he is tempted to do wrong, to yield to some alluring appetite, to engage in some dishonest or not strictly upright practice or transaction, he thinks, not only of the pleasure that will come by yielding, and of the gain that he may reap by slight dishonor, but he thinks of what has well been called "the moment after." [1] He not only *sees* things in advance, but he *feels* things in advance. And the thing he clearly feels, and wisely wishes to avoid, is the sting of sharp remorse, the awful nightmare feeling, which will sometimes track a man for years and never leave him night nor day, that he has committed a grievous wrong, which in one sense never can be done away, nor made to be as

[1] J. Brierly, *Problems of Living*, pp. 136, 188.

though it had not happened. And who can doubt that with prudence such as that, which surely is a worthy and a useful thing to have, there is many a wrong in life that would never be committed, many a sin that would never be indulged in, many a false word that never would be spoken, many an act of heartless cruelty and thoughtless selfishness that would be repented of before it had escaped us! How often, if we only stopped to think of the remorse, and pain, and agony of mind that are sure to follow from some course of evil action, we should say to the impulse as it rose within us, No! I will not do this thing; for I feel to-morrow's hand upon me, and I know too well the nature of the moral consequences. The prudent person, therefore, is the one who provides against repentance and remorse

by guarding well the door of life through which they make their silent and unwelcome entrance. And of prudence such as this there surely is a pressing need in life.

But there is another and a larger way in which the prudent person counts the cost, and of which we need to take particular and careful thought at just these present times. All of us have certain higher, nobler, better instincts that belong to us as men and women, and which count for vastly more than does the sordid love of gain and the selfish love of ease. These, we all agree, should be developed, nourished, and sustained. Among them we must count our love of goodness and of beauty, our instinctive feelings of trust, and reverence, and faith. These are qualities not lightly to be lost from life, for they add not only to the joy, but also

to the dignity and worth of being. There are many of us, therefore, who need to stop and ask ourselves at times whether we are giving these a chance to grow and flourish in the dull and heavy atmosphere of business or of pleasure where we live perhaps so constantly. Are we spiritual enough not to be hardened in these ceaseless efforts that we put forth after wealth? Are we alive enough not to die in a spiritual sense beneath this burden that we bear of what is purely temporal and outward?

A few years since, near a little Russian town this side of Moscow, an old-fashioned knapsack was dug up by a peasant who was ploughing in the field. It was filled to the brim with French coin, which bore the date of nearly a century ago, and to those who knew its history it told a forceful parable of thoughtless and imprudent

greed. It had belonged, undoubtedly, to one of Napoleon's ill-fated soldiers. After his unfortunate invasion of Russia, Bonaparte left his army to return more slowly, while he himself took hurried flight to Paris. He gave his war-treasure, which amounted to many millions of francs, into the care of Marshal Ney. But the transport wagons, which were dragging it with difficulty home, became entangled in a deep ravine. There was no time to be lost, for the enemy were following close behind. Rather than see the French gold fall into Russian hands the Marshal marched his army by the wagons. The casks had been broken open, and the soldiers were allowed to take what they desired. Many of them, in their fevered eagerness and imprudent haste, emptied their knapsacks, throwing

away all food and clothing, — the very essentials of life, — and staggered forward joyously beneath their glittering load. But the treasure, which they looked upon as such a benefit, was no protection against icy winds and drifting snow, and many of them perished miserably, weighed down to death by what was meant to give them life.

Thus, in this world of every-day existence, there are people all around us who heedlessly allow their higher, their moral, their spiritual instincts to be crushed out of them by very similar burdens. They do not count the cost, they do not prudently consider whether they have strength enough to stand erect, and march with vigor forward, as soldiers of the living God, while all their thoughts and hopes are bent on worldly things. And I

am not referring now to the one desire only of mere outward wealth or gain. As all of us know well, there are other equally absorbing interests and instincts, — worldly, shallow, narrow principles, — which perhaps cannot be banished utterly from life, but which need to be indulged in prudently, and kept in due subjection. In our love of pleasure, with our thirst for power, or seeking only for our selfish comfort or indulgent ease, we need to beware lest the nobler faculties within us are drugged and slowly stifled, till they fall at last into a deep and wakeless sleep.

One of Tolstoi's vigorous and matchless parables is entitled, "Does a man need much land?" It tells the story of a man who was offered the title to as much land as he could walk or run around, between the hours of sunrise and of sun-

set. With eager energy he starts forth in his race against himself for wealth. His desires grow as he proceeds. Can he get this much into his circuit, he wonders, as he presses forward? Yes; he must have this piece of woodland, this stretch of meadow, these acres here, and those which lie beyond. His hopes mount high, —his efforts are redoubled, his pace is quickened! All day he runs, till, spent and feverish, he sees the goal already dim amid the slanting shadows of the setting sun. He pushes toward it panting hard; he nears it; he reaches it, and pitches forward, — *dead!* And then, the moralist declares, "They took a hoe and dug a grave for him, just long enough from head to foot, and buried him." And many people die thus, and are buried in a spiritual sense each day, because they

do not prudently consider the worth of the higher faculties that God has given them.

Yes, the prudent person is the one who counts the cost in life; who understands that we are debtors in this world, "not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if we live after the flesh we shall surely die; but if through the spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live."

There is a second and a nobler thing distinctive of the prudent person. Not only does he count the cost, but, as the word itself implies, he takes a clear account of time. He knows that nothing worthy, or of real importance in this world, can be achieved or brought about at once. He is willing, therefore, and prepares his mind to wait. He does not rush in with impetuous hope, and think to change things, or to make them better, all at

once, — whether it be his own character that needs to be reformed, or the world itself in which he lives; but he prepares himself for steady effort and continuous endeavor. And this, I cannot help believing, is a very necessary quality to have, so far as the acquisition and development of the various virtues are concerned. Let it be the calm repose of self-control that we distinctly lack and which we struggle to secure; or the power of a steadfast courage; or the breadth and beauty of true magnanimity, — and the thing we need most to remember is, that moral graces such as these can never be perfected all at once.

"Souls are built as temples are, —
Inch by inch in gradual rise
Mount the layered masonries.

. . . . . .

Through the sunshine, through the snows,

Up and on the building goes;
Every fair thing finds its place,
Every hard thing lends a grace,
Every hand may make or mar." [1]

If we are content to give long weeks and weary months and even years to the training and cultivation of the mind, we should not hope to accomplish great results more easily where conscience and the character become concerned. The trouble with too many of us is, that we think to bring these things about with ease. We make great resolutions, which exceed our power to perform. And then, because we fail to keep these promises we make ourselves, discouragement sets in, and we come to be dissuaded from the task. But the prudent person understands all this. He looks ahead, beyond the lesser resolution to the large endeavor,

[1] Susan Coolidge.

and across the failure of to-day to the light which shines out from the triumph of some long to-morrow. His wisdom teaches him to wait.

Lastly, there is this distinction of the prudent person, — that he sees things in the right perspective. Because the faculty is his to look ahead, he sees beyond the petty troubles and the temporary trials that are near at hand, and does not think them larger than they really are. To-day, to-morrow, and the dim day after that, all come within the range of his endeavor; and the failure that his wisdom cannot help him to avoid, he is well prepared, at least, to meet.

And, as we all may look beyond things which are hard and painful till we see them fade away in the glory of the far horizon, so we should train ourselves to look

above them, till we find them one by one transfigured in the richness and the glory of a higher truth. There is a prudence that contributes to religious faith even as the highest wisdom is an unspotted mirror of God's power and the image of his goodness. The doubts and questionings of to-day, the hard experiences, the unsettling theories that seem to undermine and take away our faith, — oh, let us not give way to them too readily! When first they come upon us, and prefer their claims, they seem of more importance than they really are. It may be that to-morrow's light will show them to us in their true perspective. Thus it has been in the past; for many times the hasty and imprudent have declared that faith was undermined at last, and made of no avail. And thus it will be doubtless in the future. But the prudent can afford

to wait. "For wisdom is more moving than any motion. She is the breath of the power of God, and the brightness of the everlasting light." In her light "we shall see light," and be led along that shining path which ever brightens toward the perfect day.

V

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. — LUKE, xxiii, 34.

THE PILLAR OF MAGNANIMITY

It sometimes happens in the historic churches and the great cathedrals of the world, that one special pillar may be seen which stands out from the rest, and is conspicuous for its graceful beauty or its wealth of decoration. Thus it is, for instance, in that famous little church which many people visit in the neighborhood of Edinburgh. Roslin Chapel has its celebrated "Prentice pillar," in regard to which a weird and tragic tale is told. And thus it likewise is in gray old Hereford Cathedral. There, "through the arches of the screen," and beyond "the matchless choir with its handsome Norman arch," may be seen a single pillar which supports in rich design the vaulting of the heavy

roof. It has, perhaps, no more importance, so far as value of construction is concerned, than many of the others; but it far surpasses them in interest and beauty. And at certain times of day the light so falls upon it underneath the shadowed arches that a cross is formed in vague but visible outline. It is known among the worshipers at Hereford as "the Shadow of the Cross."

Thus it is with the virtue of magnanimity, which is, perhaps, the most beautiful among the pillars in life's temple. And the words which seem to me most fittingly to set it forth are those spoken by the Master from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Magnanimity is not a virtue which ever has been ranked as cardinal, and yet it bears direct relationship to one such

virtue. Justice in Plato's system was a chief among the virtues, and justice is something that can never be outgrown nor set aside. And yet there is a sense, in the life of the individual at least, in which justice flowers into magnanimity. There are times in all our lives, as later we shall come to see, when it is not exemplary, nor excellent, to insist upon what is absolutely just, exacting what the law allows. Occasions of distinct importance come when the thing expected of us is to be forbearing, forgiving, and magnanimous. This truth is one which early came to be perceived. "In Aristotle's system," says a writer,[1] — and the statement is partly, though perhaps not absolutely true, — "In Aristotle's system magnanimity occupies the supreme place," as in Plato's system jus-

[1] Edward H. Griggs, *The New Humanism*, p. 130.

tice does. Moreover, the point on which the later thinker most of all remarked was the *beauty* of this virtue. "Magnanimity," said Aristotle, "seems to be a kind of ornament of all the other virtues, in that it makes them better, and cannot be without them, and for this reason it is a hard matter to be really and truly magnanimous; for it cannot be without thorough goodness and nobleness of character." [1] Hard to embody though it be, however, and difficult in any full sense to attain, — a virtue, indeed, which none but the noblest and the truest of the race have lived out grandly, — it is also one which the veriest common places of existence, the trivial relationships, the jealousies, the rivalries, the fancied injuries of social life, make room for and demand.

[1] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book iv, ch. iv.

As I have said, however, we cannot come to understand it better than by taking thought of the famous words of Jesus on the cross. Certainly they are among the most wonderful words in history when we consider the conditions under which they were spoken. Set them like jewels in the gold of understanding thought, and how they flash with meaning, and reveal the mysterious depths of beautiful and tender color! Here was a man betrayed by his fellow-men, persecuted, mocked, reviled, and finally nailed upon a cross, and left to die. He was a man, mark you, who had injured no one; against whom no accusation could be brought of cruelty or treachery or violence. Not one of those who persecuted and abused him had any grievance to make good! And how did their victim meet them? Did he resent

their spite, and bitterly accuse them of their sin, calling down the wrath and punishment of God upon their heads, as justly might have seemed his right? No! but he took them up into his great heart of pity and forgiveness, understanding that they acted blindly and in ignorance! He prayed that divinely tender prayer for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Only a great soul could have acted thus! None but a large and divinely generous heart could so have lifted itself out of the realm of natural thoughts of punishment, if not revenge, into that of tenderness and pity.

A somewhat similar prayer was put in the mouth of Stephen, who was the first of all the Christian martyrs. Stephen was cast out of the city for his heresy and blasphemous teachings, and was put to death

beneath an avalanche of stones. And when he kneeled down to receive the cruel blows his eyes were turned toward heaven, and he cried out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep." The same chivalrous and noble spirit was displayed long centuries later by William the Silent, Prince of Orange, and founder of the Dutch Republic. He had been shot down by a cowardly assassin, the hired menial of the king of Spain. From his bed of pain, however, which all supposed would be his bed of death, he gave clear orders for the lenient treatment of his assailant, and forbade the use of torture, which was then so commonly employed.

Now these, it will probably be said, are instances of forgiveness, bearing witness to tenderness of heart; and such indeed

they are. But the truer witness which they bear is to *largeness*, rather than to tenderness of soul; and largeness of nature or of soul is magnanimity. The deeds are those of forgiveness, or forbearance; but the virtue they illustrate is that of being magnanimous.

The word "magnanimous," as of course is clear, is made up of two Latin words, — *magnus* and *animus*. The magnanimous person, therefore, is the person of a large spirit. That is to say, he is the big-souled, or the generous-spirited person, as contrasted with the man or woman who is small and narrow and petty-spirited. It is very important to understand exactly what is meant by *animus*, or "spirit." In the first place it does not mean mind. The person who has a large mind — a mind that stores away innumerable facts,

or a mind that is receptive and eager to find new truth — is not of necessity magnanimous. Such a person may, of course, possess this virtue; but something more than mental breadth has gone to constitute it. Neither do we mean "heart" when we say spirit. Some of the biggest and tenderest-hearted people in this world — people who have an almost infinite capacity for feeling the sufferings of others and entering into their distresses — have small capacity for ignoring wrongs and forgetting injuries, and rejoicing in the successes others win; and thus can lay no claim to being large of spirit. By spirit, therefore, we mean that deeper, vaguer, and less tangible quality, which is, as it were, the essence or the aggregate of a person's inner nature, and the general effluence of character and disposition.

We go on, then, to consider exactly what it means in a practical sense to be magnanimous, and where and how this virtue may be given illustration in the realms of every-day existence. None of us expect to meet the fate of Jesus, nor even to be stoned by a hostile mob as Stephen was, nor to be shot down like the Prince of Orange. Yet there must be thousands of less striking, though no less actual, occasions in the stress and turmoil of the world and life, which show us to be either large or small of nature and of soul.

First of all, we find this matter of *injuries* or *wrongs*. A great many people are met with by us all who continually have a "grievance." They complain of the injustices they suffer, and the wrongs they have sustained. Some one has injured them, or seemingly has slighted or forgotten them.

An honor that they looked for has escaped them, or some recognition which they thought their right has passed them by. Now, the small person remembers and broods over all such things until they seem a great deal more important than they really are; whereas the larger or magnanimous person scarcely gives them any thought, and, even when he takes account of them, they do not cause him any pain or worry. Thus Emerson wrote of Lincoln, "His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong." [1] (And the same might just as truly have been written of Emerson himself.) It was a saying of the martyred statesman indeed, that "A good man will not insult me, and a bad one cannot."

[1] Emerson, *Works*, vol. viii, p. 301.

No point, I suppose, in practical ethics troubles most of us much more than the commandment which forbids retaliation. Many of us believe, with more or less explicitness, in the right of meeting injury with injury, insult with insult, wrong with wrong. We claim the right of giving back as good — or, as we had better say, as *bad* — as we receive. This is only justice, we declare. And so we speak about the things that we are "justified" in doing, — that is to say, about the things which make conditions just; for that is what the meaning is of "justify." We dwell, too, on the vengeance that we have a right to take, and the retribution we are warranted in seeking. This was the spirit of the primitive Jewish law which stipulated "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, burning for burning, wound for wound, and stripe for

stripe." And that old law was a great step in advance when first it was established. Before that time men claimed a life for an eye, and they killed an enemy who had given them a wound or stripe. A stop was therefore put to wholesale vengeance when the priests insisted that a man should retaliate only to the exact extent of the injury received. In laying down that law the cause of justice was promoted. But the time came, in a later age, when it was shown to be a nobler thing to be magnanimous than merely just; to forgive and not exact; to forbear and not retort. Moreover, this ideal is one which echoes round the world in moral precept and in noble practice. "Who is the great man?" asked the mighty seer of ancient India; and he answered, "He who is strongest in the exercise of pa-

tience; he who patiently endures an injury." And then the Greek philosophers take up the cry: "One who is injured ought not to return the injury as the multitude think; for on no account can it be right. Therefore it is not right to do an evil to any man, however we may have suffered from him." "Nothing is more praiseworthy," wrote Cicero, "and nothing more clearly indicates a great and noble soul, than clemency and readiness to forgive." The command of Mahomet is much the same: "Pardon others readily and do only good unto all. Fair is the dwelling-place of those who have bridled anger and forgiven their adversaries." And in that great spirit was the action of the youthful David, who forbore to slay the man who was hunting him to death, and whom fate had placed within

his grasp. "See," said David, "and know that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest for my soul to take it!"

It is no doubt difficult to act consistently and well in ways like these. The principle to many of us seems entirely impracticable. The point, however, that we need to get distinctly in our minds is this,—that it is merely a question of how *large* we are. The mighty lion in the forest, for the very reason that it is the king of beasts, disdains to take account of lesser creatures. And so the man or woman who is genuinely large of soul may calmly move along through life untroubled by the stings and worries or the little misconceptions and vexations of the world. An old Persian writer always seemed to me, indeed, to

teach this virtue as none others have. Let us be, he said, like the mountain lake, and not like the wayside pool. For the shallow pool becomes defiled by every stone thrown into it; but the mountain lake is large and deep enough not to have the clearness and beauty of its waters spoiled by such a slight disturbance.

Another feature, and one most prominent in the virtue of magnanimity, is the readiness and capacity to enter into and appreciate the successes and the joys of others. We are well acquainted with the duty and the grace of sympathy, which literally means to suffer with. But what we really need is another word, which should be as freely used, and would mean *rejoicing* with. It is natural with us all to weep with those who weep. There is something in our natures which disposes

us to grieve with those who fail, and to mourn with those who suffer. But it is a harder though a no less lovely thing to rejoice with those who have some genuine cause for gladness. It oftentimes requires true nobility of soul to do that heartily and well. The poor dumb animal will often be at pains to assist a wounded fellow-creature; but it takes much more at times than the simple manly or the womanly in us — it takes whatever godlike there may be about us — to make us rejoice at the successes others have. It is one thing for the successful person to be glad of the success of others; and simple enough for the happy person to enter into others' happiness! It was comparatively natural, though graceful and praiseworthy as well, for a man like Lowell to declare that one of the joys of his later life was to count the

triumphs of his friends. And thus it was with Michel Angelo, who could well afford to be magnanimous. Yet the mighty sculptor carved his memory more deeply in the walls of time by reason of the praise he gave to others with such generous freedom. There are works of art still standing in his native city which are less associated with the men who wrought them than they are with the man who so freely praised them. It may be that we hardly can recall the artist's name who wrought the bronze gates of the little Baptistery; but we remember well how Angelo declared that they were "fit to be the gates of Paradise."

An attitude like this, as I have said, is comparatively natural and simple for those who have themselves succeeded. But how much harder it is, how much grander,

how much more magnanimous, in short, for the disappointed and afflicted in this life to clasp with warmth and fellowship the hand of prosperity and joy, and to walk in happy comradeship through life with those who have gained where we have lost! Nothing indeed in the world is much more beautiful and touching than to see men and women who have failed in life themselves, who have struggled bravely and eagerly for success and lost it, who have hoped and dreamed and loved, and have plucked nothing at the end but the bitter fruit of disappointment, — nothing, I say, is much more beautiful and touching than to see such people large and generous-hearted enough to forget their own failures, and bury their own chagrin, in the joys and satisfactions others have. Day by day we need to keep

the beauty of this larger and appreciative spirit clearly in our minds. It is so easy in this world to criticise and censure, — it is so common a thing, alas! to hear the talents and achievements of other people minimized and treated lightly, — that it is refreshing, and uplifting even, to come in touch with those who are big enough, and with sufficient breadth of soul, to rejoice with those who find prosperity, and to glory in their real attainments.

Another phase of magnanimity on no account to be overlooked, is the capacity to understand and to make allowance for the difficulties, trials, and temptations that other people often have to fight against, while doing justice also to their worthy traits of character.

One of the unfortunate things in life is

the fact that the very goodness of good people sometimes makes them almost wicked. As all of us know well, the most irreproachably upright people in this world are sometimes cruel and narrowly unflinching in their attitude toward every form of wrong and sin. They are so insistent on the path of virtue for themselves that they draw aside their social garments lest by chance they brush against some form of wickedness and error. And I do not say that there may not often be excuse for this. And yet, upon the other hand, and over against such narrow and partially virtuous lives as these, I simply set the great example of the Master. How beautifully, and with what unerring constancy, he revealed in varied ways the largeness of his noble nature, allowing for the fact that some people are tempted so

much more severely than others are, and taking into clear and full account the heavy odds that sometimes are against the living of the virtuous life. He did not wait until he hung upon the cross before he spoke the generous word to those who had blindly erred and deeply sinned. It may be that his own temptation taught him, as it is a pity others are not oftener taught, to be forbearing, merciful, and patient, — to take people at their best and not their worst, and to trust them for the things they yet might make themselves.

To be kind, therefore, instead of cruel, thoughtful and not indifferent, generous and hopeful while never selfish and despondent; to be willing to do a favor even when trouble is involved, and anxious to lighten burdens at the cost of adding to our own, — that is a true philosophy of

life and the religion which makes one a disciple of the Master.

And now, consider finally that kindred feature in the life of magnanimity, — the power, namely, to appreciate and value rightly the good qualities in people which are not particularly *our* good qualities, and the ways they have of being helpful in the world, which are not our own especial ways. All of us are born with definite tendencies, with varying "likes" and "dislikes," with differing capacities. These are peculiarly our own. But other people, to a similar degree, have theirs. The world is made up of an almost infinite variety of moral and spiritual gifts. And it needs them all. For the kingdom of heaven is indeed most like a net which is cast into the sea, and gathers of every kind, and we should all allow for this diversity.

We should be large enough to recognize the value of very differing "operations." For "He gave some to be apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," for the slow upbuilding of this mighty world in righteousness and love. And if all were prophets, where would the quiet hearers be? If all laid greatest stress on justice, where would pity be? If all put courage first, what would become of mercy? And if all insisted on entire independence, what would unselfish service count? But now has the great God, who is over all, appointed tasks which each may find a joy in doing well; and the saint's self-abnegation and the hero's courage and the strong man's self-control, together with the tenderness, the generosity, the faithfulness, the earnest-

ness of thousands of unnoticed lives, are all deserving in his sight.

> "All service ranks the same with God:
> . . . God's puppets best and worst
> Are we; there is no last nor first."

We all should learn in some sense to approach this all-embracing and inclusive view. Our magnanimity should be patterned, albeit so remotely, after God's omnipotent perfection, who makes his sun to shine and his rain to fall, on the just and unjust, on the evil and the good.

There can be no doubt about it; to be big and broad and generous, — to be large in outlook, large in forgiveness, large in our readiness to allow for all the differences of life and of opinion; to be ready as we may to overlook the feeble, the erring, and the false, but to look with kindness and appreciation on the eager,

the earnest, and the hopeful, — that is what it means to be magnanimous. And whoso has attained to that great virtue is fitted, not alone to be a simple pillar in the temple of his God, but he comes to be a pillar of surpassing beauty, on whom the light and shade shall fall, which have their radiant source in heaven itself.

VI

And if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . . Love therefore is the fulfilment of the law. — ROMANS, xiii, 9, 10

THE ALTAR OF LOVE

With the four great virtues which Plato outlined and described in his Republic, the philosophers of Greece and Rome remained content. These virtues were looked upon as all-sufficient, and were thought to leave no moral feature of importance out of the account. To be temperate and courageous, just and prudent, were the great essentials of the noble and perfected life. Neither the state nor the individual could be looked upon as rightly organized or well developed, if any one of these distinctive qualities were lacking; but when they all were present an harmonious whole was reached. "Such, then," says the great philosopher, after he has described these virtues in detail,

"is the state or constitution which I call good and right, and such is the good man; and if this one be right I must call the rest bad and wrong; applying these terms both to the organization of states and to the formation of individual character." [1]

It is evident enough, however, when once we come to think of it with care, that these famous virtues have to do with a portion only of the fabric of our human nature. Wisdom and justice spring from intellectual insight; courage and self-control depend upon the action of the will. The Greeks, therefore, with their intellectual supremacy, gave finest illustration to the first two virtues; the Romans, with their practical discernment and forceful common sense, gave fullest

[1] *The Republic*, book v.

evidence of the others, both in public and in private life.

But the intellect and the will, as I have just suggested, do not exhaust the rich resources of the human soul. The central function of our life is still untouched. The *heart remains*, — the heart with its sweeping impulses and deep emotions of love, compassion, generosity; of self-forgetfulness and sympathy and service. When you see a man or woman temperate and courageous, magnanimous and prudent, that and nothing else, you do not see, from our modern point of view, a finished and perfected manhood or womanhood. There is one thing lacking, and that missing element is not alone of supreme importance on its own account, but its more distinctive and much greater value lies in this, — that it lends to each of the four

great virtues new dignity and warmth, a deeper richness and intensity of meaning. Courage, as we saw, is never so great and wonderful as when a perfect love has cast out every fear; while prudence, magnanimity, and self-control become more natural and easy when nurtured by some deep and generous emotion.

It was just this added element which Christianity brought into the world. The Christian religion came into contact with the pagan world, which was cold and formal, proud and on the verge of national decay, and, with its heart of pity and its message of unselfish service, it supplied a mighty moral need. The truth of this was not at first distinctly understood; or, at least, not formally announced. The time came, however, when the Christian teachings were carefully brought to bear

upon the pagan virtues, and, when this took place, the ancient virtues were not swept away; they were merely added to. According to Thomas Aquinas Christianity added three new virtues to those which Plato had originally stated. These were the three abiding elements of Paul, — faith, hope, and charity. St. Thomas gave them the name of "theological virtues," and placed them above the classic and familiar four. They were, he said, the virtues which "set man in the way of supernatural happiness." [1]

Now, whatever may be said of the fitness of classifying faith and hope as virtues, when they properly are attitudes of mind, it hardly can be claimed, I think, that Christianity contributed anything dis-

[1] Aquinas, *Ethics*, translated by Joseph Rickaby, vol. i, question lxii.

tinctly new in these respects. Long centuries before the Christian era people had believed with great intensity and real conviction, while hope is a natural attitude of life in nearly all its phases. All that fairly can be claimed for the Christian religion in this respect is, that it gave to faith a new content, and to hope a new object.

With love, however, it was wholly different. When the Christian communities first took root and sprang up in pagan Rome, the thing that was remarked about them was not, "See how those people *believe*," or "See how those people *hope*," but, "See how those Christians *love*." Love, therefore, or charity, which is the underlying impulse which gives birth to pity, sympathy, self-forgetfulness, generosity, and service, is the fifth and final virtue that well may be considered.

It is evident, from what already has been said, that love is not so much a separate pillar in the temple of virtue, to be classed with courage, prudence, self-control, as it is an added feature in the arrangement and construction of the entire building, giving depth and greater meaning to the whole. Love is the chancel where the holy of holies is, the high altar whence the incense floats aloft. It is the place where the sacred fire burns, which sheds a glow among the heavy columns and the broadening arches out beyond. It is the spot where sacrifices silently are made, and mysteries recalled. "A certain amount of Stoicism," says a writer, "forms the best basis upon which the higher virtues can rest. By this I mean that fortitude, courage, patience, and the like should make the character strong; while love,

sympathy, and helpfulness make it beautiful." [1] Christianity, in other words, came into the world and found these noble virtues on which heathendom had laid its emphasis; and it did not add another pillar to the temple that they formed, but it gave that temple added glory and significance. For "no true virtue," wrote Thomas Aquinas, "can be without charity." "Without charity there may be an act good of its kind, and yet not perfectly good." [2]

We go on, therefore, to consider this altar that was built by love, and to take account of certain features which it introduces into life. In the first place, there can be no doubt of this, that a tender pity, a compassionate love, a redeeming and

[1] C. C. Everett, *Ethics for Young People*, p. 32.

[2] Aquinas, *Ethics*, vol. ii, question xxiii.

uplifting sympathy, a general spirit of helpfulness, in short, were the things on which the Master laid particular emphasis in life as well as teaching. Just as hardness of heart and self-righteous bigotry were the sins that he denounced most bitterly, so love was the thing that caused a person's sins to be forgiven, while an act of helpful service meant fulfillment of the entire law. "In this," he said distinctly to his followers at the end, "shall men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another."

It is an interesting and inspiring fact that this, the central feature in the Master's message to the world, should have been so clearly grasped by the first disciples, and so nobly set forth by them as they reached out to redeem men's lives. The apostle Paul goes forth into all the

darkness and the dangers of pagan unbelief and opposition, and the grandest thing that has been preserved for us among his writings is his glorious chant in praise of love. St. John lived to be a feeble and revered old man, and the last words that escaped his trembling lips, according to tradition, were substantially the words of his Epistle: "Little children, love one another, not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Moreover, obedience to these commands became, as we have seen, the most distinctive feature of those first communities and churches. It was the thing that won for them at the first respect, and after that, in large part, their adherents. On one occasion, it is said that a deacon was directed by the civil authorities to hand over the treasures of his church. For reply,

he pointed to the poor, whom they had among them, as their only treasures. And it was, indeed, a literal fact that all the possessions of the early church were set apart as poor-funds, and were given away in charity.[1]

What, then, it is time for us to ask, are the fruits of this pervasive and productive spirit, which was added to the life of heathen virtue? What are the things that come into the person's life who kneels before the altar love has built? I shall speak of only two, which are beautiful to see, and worthy of devout encouragement. And the first of these is *generosity*.

All of us know what generosity is. It is, indeed, a virtue in itself, and none is

[1] A. Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (Theological translation library), vol. i, p. 200.

much more beautiful to look upon or think about. There are noble examples of it all around us, and they often seem upon the increase day by day. Whether we speak of the generosity which finds expression in great gifts of money, or of the kindred beneficence by which a person gives not only what he has, but what he is, or whether of that large and appreciative spiritual quality which inspires us to give full credit to the deeds and lives of others, which we spoke about as magnanimity, the quality is equally impressive and inspiring.

We are apt, I think, to associate an element of self-denial with each act of generosity. The giving of one thing implies, we think, the giving up of something else; and there is a sense in which that may be true. Among all the moral graces of the

world, however, none ever seems more natural and hearty and spontaneous than genuine generosity. As we love to see the truly generous act, so the doer of it loves to do it. There is a joy in giving that there is not in many another virtue, — that there is not, for instance, in prudence, self-control, or courage even. The saddest thing, perhaps, about the niggardly and selfish person is the fact that he deliberately cuts himself off from so great a fund of genuine happiness. For, if we count over the liberal-handed people whom we know, — those who give most constantly and largely to the various appeals that are made upon us all, — we shall find, I think, that, for the most part, they are happy, cheerful, and contented people. It may be true, no doubt, that their happiness of nature, or buoyancy of spirits,

is one of the things which goes to *make* them generous. But I am very certain that it also is a fact that natural cheerfulness becomes increased, and heavy gloom at times dispelled, by the inspiration which comes up to people from the fragrance of their own good deeds.

In this respect generosity, when it is the true fulfillment or expression of a loving spirit, has a tremendous advantage over all the other virtues. Oftentimes we have to take it on trust that prudence has paid, or that self-restraint has been worth while, or that courage has not been idly displayed. But the generous person sees, and tastes, and often may enjoy, the abundant fruit his wise and charitable acts have helped or tended to produce. The person who endows a university, or opens a museum, or supplies the city with land for

a public park, or helps erect a hospital, or makes it possible for some struggling youth to get an education, has done no more, perhaps, in a moral sense, than the person who curbs an unruly temper, or nobly forgives an injury, or bravely meets a sorrow, or patiently assumes a heavy burden. Sometimes he has not done as much. But he has the inestimable privilege very often of seeing the *value* of his generous deed. It is a moral and spiritual investment which pays not only semi-annual or quarterly dividends with regularity, but monthly, weekly, even daily dividends of joy. If there is one thing, therefore, in the world on account of which the rich person fully deserves the envy of the poor one, it is just for this, — his mighty opportunity in life for increasing his own joy while adding to the joys of

others. As a matter of fact, this natural and noble form of envy is very widespread in the world. People often express the longing for riches just because of the good they know that they could do with them. And I believe, for my own part, that in a great majority of cases they would really do the good, if the opportunity were theirs.

Perhaps it is well to recognize in this connection that generosity is more common among women than among men. And I say this in spite of the fact that the most prodigious gift probably in all history was made the other day toward the cause of education by a man.[1] Kindness, sympathy, helpfulness, self-sacrifice, an

[1] John D. Rockefeller in February, 1907, gave $32,000,000 to the General Education Board of the United States.

overflowing mercy, — these are more natural to the warm rich soil of the woman's nature than the man's. It was Mary, in the New Testament story, and not Matthew, nor James, nor Peter, nor John, who poured the expensive ointment over the Master's head; and it was a masculine voice, accustomed to dwell upon the *cost* of things, which cried out against such waste. It was from the table of Dives, a rich Hebrew gentleman, and not from that of any mother in Israel, with her spacious heart all full of pity, that the wretched Lazarus was allowed to pick the merest crumbs. The rich men dropped their gifts into the treasury without remark, but it was the two mites from the widow's scant supply which the Master called attention to as generous. And thus it always has been. The soil of the woman's

heart is such that the tender flowers of helpfulness and pity have bloomed in it more fragrantly and naturally than ever in the heart of man. If she has not given as largely in the course of history as man, it has only been for the very evident reason that she has not had as much to give.

This brings us back, therefore, to the central and the all-important point, of which we must not cease to take account, — namely, that the only truly and nobly generous gifts are those which are laid upon the altar love has built. We are all familiar with the saying that "the gift without the giver is bare." And what we mean is that the gift which is not made with genuine interest, or solicitude, or eagerness to help, is neither truly generous nor nobly beautiful. Love must be

the impulse and the prompting spirit,—love, of which the kindred qualities are tenderness, compassion, sympathy, and human interest. Moreover, this is why the generosity which grew up in obedience to the Christian teachings was a wholly different and a distinctly nobler quality than anything the faith of Rome or the philosophy of Greece had known or taken into full account. Strange and almost incomprehensible as it may seem, the Christian conception of this duty was something almost wholly new, in its deeper aspects, to the people who had laid such noble emphasis upon the other virtues. "The *caritas* of the Christians," says a writer,[1] "was a different quality

[1] Francis G. Peabody, *Unitarianism and Philanthropy*, an address before the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian churches, Washington, D. C., 1895.

from the *liberalitas* of the Romans. Help for the helpless, hospitals for the sick, almsgiving as a part of worship, respect for woman, fraternity between employers and employed, — these qualities of social life became distinctly Christian contributions to society." And thus it was as regards the thought and practice that belonged to Greece. The idea of humanity, as we call it, or brotherhood, exercised no influence upon Greek thought and civilization. "It never occurred to Plato," as some one has expressed it, "that God made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." [1] Love, therefore, and the generosity to which it cannot fail to give expressive birth, not only was not classed among

[1] George A. Gordon, *The New Epoch for Faith*, p. 57.

the cardinal virtues, but it was not looked upon as a virtue, or a good at all.[1] If you examine the list of qualities — a sufficiently long one — which Aristotle drew up as including all the virtues, you will find that neither mercy nor sympathy nor pity have a place. Instead of them, says a writer,[2] "we have a kind of heathen counterpart, liberality; and the intensified form of the latter, *magnificence*. He is liberal, according to this thinker, who gives from a noble motive, and in a right spirit, — who gives the right amount to the right person at the right time. The important person is not the recipient of the gift, but the giver; the object is not to alleviate suffering, but to

[1] See page 7.

[2] Friedrich Paulsen, *A System of Ethics*, translated by F. Thilly, p. 83.

glorify the name of the benefactor. Not a single word throughout the long discussion is said of the neediness of the recipient of the gift; compassion plays no part as a motive."

We surely need to remember the reality and importance of this great distinction at the present time. We need to cultivate and encourage in ourselves and others not that liberality alone which marked the pagan world, and often reached to very noble heights, but that truer generosity which is a nobler and a higher thing, because it gives fulfillment to the law of love. We need to keep in remembrance always the root from which it springs, and the feelings which alone can cause it to flower into fragrant and completed loveliness. We talk a great deal at the present time about the responsibility of riches and the

obligation that there is connected with great wealth. We speak no less about the need and duty that we all should do our parts, and lend the little help we can. And all of this is well. It needs to be given constant and emphatic utterance. But, though it should be taken up and repeated with incessant frequency, and with a thousand times the eloquence it has at present, it could not take the place nor do the work which belongs to that spirit which alone fulfills the law. If our age is more generous than any which the world has seen, — which it doubtless is, — it is because this spirit has not died out of society, but has rather been increased. The sense of human kinship, the consciousness and deep conviction that the vigorous should help the weak and the fortunate uphold the feeble, is the strong

controlling impulse which contributes to a noble generosity. It is because we see, behind the outward walls of hospital or asylum, the maimed, the ill, the weak; behind the university the hungering student longing for the bread of learning; behind the Southern schools an ignorant race unable to uplift itself, and environed by a people incapable of giving much assistance, that we make our gifts and try to do our parts.

Even were there time to do so, how little we could tell in any way completely the absorbing story of the generous acts of life! The sins, the selfishnesses, the shortcomings, the viciousness of people, — these lie in large part on the surface of the social world, and we see them often all too clearly. But the kindness, the tenderness, the good-will, the generosity of life,

become distilled so silently, and so often in the shade of secrecy, that, like the dew, we find them only in the dawning of sudden insight, when the veil of obscurity has been removed.

But there is a form of generosity which does not speak in terms of wealth, unless it be those greater riches which belong to heart and character. Its vocabulary is the greater and the longer one of deeds. There is a generosity which consists in the giving of one's self. And that is *service;* in regard to which I wish to say a single word or two.

Service is a second, and perhaps the greatest word of love. This was the thing on which the teachings of the Gospels lay the greatest emphasis. The entire law and the Prophets, according to the Master, — that is to say the whole of religion, —

may be summed up in two great commandments, of which the second was like unto the first. And the second word was simply this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And to the question of the hesitating and persistent lawyer, as to who one's neighbor is, Jesus gave his instant and most famous answer: "It is he to whom one may extend a hand in helpfulness or service." Love, therefore, means human *usefulness*. It is the capacity and readiness to give assistance when we are needed, and to make the roads of life more smooth and safe and easy for the spent and wounded travelers of earth.

This is something which does not need to be enlarged upon. For to be of use, to help, to count for something, to lend a hand and bear some part, are things we hear about and see most often at the pre-

sent time. The capacity and readiness to do are only limited by the number of the avenues which wisdom indicates as likely to lead on to good, and prove of benefit. Moreover, the simple doing of good, as we cannot well remind ourselves too often, "is but another name for morality," or virtue, "in its entirety." And though "the parts and signs of goodness are many," as Lord Bacon long ago declared,[1] "there are none of more account than helpfulness and eager service." For "if a man be gracious and courteous . . . it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island, cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins to them; if he be compassionate toward the afflictions of others it shows that his heart

[1] Bacon, *Moral and Historical Works*, Essay xiii, "Of Goodness, and Goodness of Nature."

is like the noble tree that is wounded itself when it gives the balm."

"And if there be any other commandment it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. . . . Love, therefore, is the fulfilment of the law." Yes! it is indeed fulfillment of the highest and completest kind! For the person who has in any fullness this spirit in his life, has that without which no single virtue ever is complete, but with and through which all other elements of character become ennobled and enriched.

And here is something which the world may think about with care, and in which there is not a little comfort and divine encouragement. We all have periods of very painful failure as we go about this work of moral self-perfection. These pil-

lars of the separate virtues that we strive to shape and carve and set securely in their proper places, often seem to us but poorly worked out and developed in our lives. Perhaps when we had thought them firmly wrought, and fit supports to lean upon and hold our characters secure, we find them shaken and distorted by the fierce temptations of the world. But when this happens it is much if we have kept that sacred fire burning which has power to illuminate and consecrate the whole. For he who kneels in reverence still before the altar love has built, and then goes out to do his part in life and bear his burdens, though he fails at times in prudence, and perhaps in courage, and even in a steadfast self-control, has made his very life into a temple of the living God.

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
U · S · A