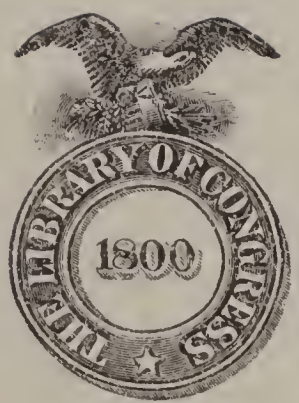
THE ROMANCE OF RIGHT LIVING

AMOS R. WELLS



Class BV4501
Book .W46
Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

The Romance of Right Living

By AMOS R. WELLS

The Romance of Right Living
Studies of Life's Problems $1.50

A Cyclopedia of Twentieth Century
Illustrations $3.00

Bible Miniatures
One Hundred and Fifty Scriptural Character Studies, cloth, net $1.50

Three Years with the Children
Or three times fifty-two five-minute sermons. Net $1.25

Sunday-school Success
12mo, cloth, net $1.25

The Cheer Book
A Store of Daily Optimism.
12mo, cloth, net $1.00

Nutshell Musings
Counsels for the Quiet Hour.
18mo, cloth, net . . . . . 35c.

When Thou Hast Shut Thy Door
75c.

The Romance of Right Living

By

AMOS R. WELLS

Author of "Bible Miniatures," "A Cyclopedia of Twentieth Century Illustrations," etc.

New York *Chicago*

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

London and Edinburgh

Copyright, 1923, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

BV4501
.W46

©CI A711252

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 North Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

JUL 19 '23

PREFACE

THE purpose of these chapters is to illustrate the joyous and adventurous side of Christianity. "Dim Defiles" is the key-essay of the book. I have tried to make every page in this volume shine with the splendour of Christian optimism. No knight of old set forth on any quest more gallantly and happily than the most ordinary follower of Jesus Christ may enter the most ordinary day and attempt the most ordinary task. If the knight had a king for his comrade, so may we have, and the King of kings. If the Holy Grail was his goal, or a ransomed Holy Land, we may find a Holy Land in our village, and receive from the Saviour's hand the Holy Grail in blessed communion at the close of each day's toil. Hidden in all common experiences may be exquisite surprises and amazing rewards. As we turn the next corner we may see the world at our feet. There is no prose in right living; it is all poetry. You do not believe it? Then read my book!

AMOS R. WELLS.

AUBURNDALE, MASSACHUSETTS.

Contents

I

DIM DEFILES

THE accompanying rhyme was sent out as a New Year's card to some of my friends, among them an editor, who straightway asked me to expand the thought into a New Year's message. This I did gladly, because I believe that romance is possible for all lives but attained by very few, and that attaining it is one of the chief secrets of happy and useful living. [And it will be noted that the blank in the rhyme may be conveniently filled by "fourth," "fifth," "sixth," or what you will.]

May the twenty-—th year of the twentieth century
Be for my friends a trifle adventure-y,
Blest with adventures in lands of the soul,
Out where the rivers of happiness roll,
Out amid marvels of joy and surprise
Sprung from the earth and flung down from the skies
In the brightening lands where all blessedness dwells:
This is the greeting of

AMOS R. WELLS.

I have always been enamoured of the words "dim defiles." I do not quite know what a defile is, and do not intend ever to look it up in the dictionary, thus removing from it the delightful sense of mystery which it now possesses for me. The words

always bring up memories of "Ivanhoe" and "The Talisman" and "The Conquest of Granada." They show me a troop of gallant knights, their horses stepping proudly, their shields and spears and armour glittering in the bright sunshine, their banners waving in the breeze. And slowly the splendid cavalcade wends its way down a dim defile. The shadows engulf it, and every nerve of my mind quivers in anticipation of the deeds of valour and the glorious adventures that await those knights. Anything that is heroic and satisfying may happen in a dim defile.

Well, how about the dim defile of a day? Is anything more mysterious than the next twelve hours after sunrise? What awaits us in those rocky corridors of time? Robbers lie in ambush there, caves of treasure are to be discovered there, steep paths lead upward to lordly castles, dragons bar the way, storms are hiding among the mountains, flowers are hiding among the mosses. Perils the most appalling, opportunities the most stimulating, rewards the most satisfying, all these are within the possibilities of those twelve hours.

I like to think, before rising from my bed, about some of the adventures that may befall me during the day on which I am entering. I may meet a new and splendid friend. I may have some new vision of my work. I may at last place forever under my feet some long-victorious temptation. I may get a new grip on life. I may open up a new book or

discover a new strength and beauty in the old Book. I may undertake some fine task that I have never dared to attempt before. I may enter upon a wonderful new path that will lead me to a marvelous realm of enjoyment and achievement. Some of these hopes become concrete in my mind. I cannot wait an instant longer to realize them, and I leap from my bed into eager activity.

What is true of a day is true of a year of days. Once catch the spirit of romance and nothing can be dull. Romance is not in things but in soul. Adventures lie in the adventurer, not in his surroundings. No Graustark is more crowded with exciting events than the twelve months of any year will be to any daring and enterprising spirit.

A friend of mine, a world traveler, a well-known newspaper correspondent, advised me the other day to get out of my shell, to make a break, to do something different. He was just back from doing something different—in Arabia, in Egypt, in China, in France, in no end of places and ways. I meekly accepted his gallant advice, and did not dare or care to disclose my own adventures in the dim defiles of my Boston days. Probably he would not have believed me. My voyages of exploration, my campaigns, my combats, my dashes into the unknown and the mysterious, have no connection with railways and steamboats and automobiles and airships. They do not stand out in relief to the eye, but only to the adventurous heart.

Nevertheless they are real. They are the most real things in the world. They will be written in enduring annals after most wars and journeys and vast material enterprises are quite forgotten. For they take firm hold on eternity.

Yes, there will be dim defiles in the eternal world. All earth's rock will crumble, earth's geography be quite obliterated, even the memory of earth's adventures be swallowed in oblivion, but the heavenly adventures will be ever more interesting and vital with the passing eons. There is no monotony in heaven, nor is there the least dull shadow of monotony in the heavenly life on earth.

Therefore let us determine to explore in knightly and spirited fashion the dim defiles of this present year. Let us set forth with the zest of Roosevelt when he went to South America, of Livingstone when he threaded the dark forests of Africa, of Columbus when he turned the prow of his vessel westward. To-day is our Eldorado. To-day is our Klondike. In To-day is our Golden Fleece. In To-day is the Holy Grail. "After it, follow it, follow the Gleam!"

Our adventures will begin at once, and just where we are. As soon as we realize that romance material is in all places and all times and for every soul, the web of romance begins to spin around us. God never designed a humdrum life. God is the great Romancer, the infinite Pioneer. "Follow me," He cries, "into the dim defiles. Eye has not seen the

glories and beauties you will behold. Ear has not heard the strains of exalted music that will burst upon you. The mind of man has not conceived the wonders that you will discover. Follow me, for I am the Way into the Abundant Life."

II

OURSELVES FROM NEW ANGLES

ONE of life's most striking experiences is the getting of the first view of ourselves from an unaccustomed viewpoint. We see in our mirrors our front faces and a little farther down; that is all the majority of us know about our appearance for many years. Then we have a photograph taken showing our side face, or we happen to use in a clothing store several mirrors at an angle, and for the first time we see ourselves as others see us, from top to toe and all around.

Seldom do we find ourselves looking as we had thought we looked. Usually our appearance from these new angles leaves much to be desired. We become conscious of a receding chin, a turned-up nose, awkward legs, stooped shoulders. We discover wrinkles of which we had been ignorant. We wish that we had not made these disagreeable discoveries. Perhaps we square our shoulders and determine stoutly that we will improve the view of ourselves at the new angle, and make it as pleasing as we have come to consider our front faces.

Properly used, the experience becomes an important factor in our self-education.

Now what happens so helpfully in the matter of our transient bodies, ought to be brought about for our immortal souls. It is not so easy, however, to see our characters from new angles. They cannot be photographed. There are no mirrors to show their sides and backs and full lengths. We must go at the problem with greater painstaking.

Friendly criticism furnishes one of the best ways of seeing our character from an unfamiliar angle. If you have a friend who is sympathetic and loving and at the same time perfectly frank and courageous, count him among the most precious gifts of heaven. To be sure, any honest and discerning criticism is of immense value, even though it come from a bitter enemy; but perhaps it is asking too much of human nature to expect one to receive such strictures. Out of the mouth of a proved friend, however, they should be more than welcome. It is the height of folly to reject them petulantly, as we so often do. We will rather invite them, if we are wise; and if we have no such friend, we shall make it a principal aim of life to get one. The ideal giver of such advice will be a father or mother, sister or brother, husband or wife or child. They will shrink from giving it, the gift will cost real heroism; let us accept it with a grateful warmth that will dissolve their reluctance, and let us act upon it with absolute assurance of its worth.

We may also view ourselves at a new angle through a new experience. Here comes in one great advantage of travel, which discloses to the sagacious traveler as much of the unknown continent of his character as of the novel material scenes through which he passes. A change of occupation will show us much of ourselves that we had not dreamed of, much of weakness and also much of strength. Best of all, and fortunately easiest of all, we come to know ourselves better through new tasks. We can enter upon these at our will, some needed service of God and man which will make fresh demands upon us, bring out unsuspected powers, and also throw us back upon God by the revealing of many mental and spiritual shortcomings from which we had fondly imagined ourselves to be free. It is well often to branch out into novel work for the work's sake, but quite as much for the sake of ourselves.

The Bible furnishes still another mirror in which we may see ourselves from new angles. As we read its searching pages we begin to see our faults very clearly. What it holds up as the ideal course of action we perceive to be very different from our daily lives. The purity which it recommends, the heroism it praises, seem very far from us. Every new book, every new chapter, shows us life from a new angle, and so shows us our lives from new angles. We see ourselves, not as others see us, but as God must see us; and that is the deepest self-revelation.

Prayer is a wonderful help, if we would get new views of our real selves. Prayer is the great conscience-clearer. Prayer is the stern duty-enforcer. Prayer is the sweet consoler, the glorious strengthener. Prayer is unmerciful in its pictures of ourselves as we are and as we ought to be, wholly merciful in its picture of a merciful, empowering God. Prayer is the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Teacher, who not only takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, but in that light shows us ourselves, disconcertingly our real selves, encouragingly our possible selves.

A beautiful mirror in which we see ourselves at new angles is a noble example. "Comparisons are odious" is a false proverb; to the sensible man comparisons are the essence of wisdom. By comparing ourselves with those who are better, wiser, stronger, more skillful than we are, we begin to get a just estimate of ourselves, and that understanding is the basis of betterment.

If this is true of mere human examples, it is conspicuously true of the Great Example. Jesus is the living Image of a perfect life. He is "the crystal Christ," the flawless One of Lanier's poem. Viewing the matchless portrait in the four Gospels, we hang our heads with shame at our own ugliness. Viewing it still more intently, we stand proudly upright again, for He has called us brothers, He has said that His Father is our Father, and that He,

with all His perfections, will come and dwell in us.

This, this is the climax of our pursuit of self-knowledge. We have looked in many mirrors, have seen ourselves from many angles. Now we look into the perfect mirror; and seeing in that mirror the glory of Christ, we "are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory." We have become like Him, for we have seen Him as He is.

III

THE DUTY THAT DOES NOT APPEAL TO US

WHEN I was in college my professor of ethics made much of the age-long problem, whether happiness or duty should be supreme among human pursuits. He argued for happiness, and I, with the idealism of youth, for duty, and many were the bouts we had in that small classroom.

Of course we were both wrong, and both right. Of course the perfect observance of duty is the supreme enjoyment of happiness. And of course, in our imperfect humanity, while we instinctively seek happiness we consciously seek duty.

The question that troubles many is, Should we not instinctively prefer duty? Should not duty always appeal to us, always allure us, as a prospect of perfect happiness, of solid bliss? Should we be obliged so often to force ourselves into duty-doing? Many sensitive consciences are anxious about this.

It is right to think about it, because there is really no keener test of our characters than the things we long for. But we must take ourselves as we are, with all our inherited faultiness and sin-

fulness, and be satisfied if on the whole we are growing wiser and stronger, with a deeper longing for God's approval, a more constant pleasure in duty-doing, and a saner appraisal of the hollowness of temporary enjoyment. If every year duty becomes easier and happier, and the trivialities of life weigh less with us, we have no ground for anxiety.

Even if duty does not always appeal to us, a great point is gained when we recognize it as duty. A spendthrift who keeps accounts is not hopeless. Perceiving God's will is far from doing it, but it is at least the first step toward doing it.

And certainly if, perceiving God's will, we go on and do it even though we must force our own wills in order to do it, we have taken a long second step. Going to church from a sense of duty is a cold and barren act compared with church attendance from love of God's house, but it puts us in the way of getting that love, of going to church because we long for the courts of the Lord as David did. Giving from a sense of duty counts little: "The gift without the giver is bare"; but many a duty gift has kindled a fire in a frozen heart and made real generosity possible.

It all depends on whether we know ourselves or not, whether we perceive the partial nature of our duty and are dissatisfied with it, or are blind to its inadequacy and rest content in it, even become proud of it. That is what was the matter with the

Pharisee. His long prayers, even on the street corners, were not wrong; neither was his scrupulous temple-going; neither was his tithing. All of this was on the way toward right, provided he had not made up his mind that he had already arrived, and thanked God for it.

But is it too much to say that for the majority of persons it suffices that a duty does not appeal to them, and they will have none of it? At any rate, this is true of a vast number. "I don't care for that sort of thing," and the question of prayer-meeting attendance is settled in the negative. "I never was much of a hand for the Sunday School," and Christian education is thrown out of court. "The church? Well, some way, it doesn't appeal to me," and they take no more thought about church membership.

The immense egotism of this is as absurd as is its futility. As well might a man turn his back on Niagara and say, "Some way, you know, I never did fancy water falls." As well might a man yawn through a symphony orchestra concert, and at the end explain, "Really, Beethoven never did appeal to me." As well might a man close Hamlet with a bang and the supercilious remark, "I never did see much in Shakespeare, anyway." These remarks settle nothing but the status of the one who makes them.

Here is a duty that has back of it the assent of the human conscience for hundreds of generations,

yes, the majestic confirmation of the voice of God. Saints and martyrs have died for it. Heroes have struggled for it. Sages have argued it. Poets and painters have wreathed it with all the splendours of imagination. It has flashed down the centuries in a matchless path of honour. It has brought unbounded blessings to mankind. And here is an insignificant mite who puffs out his chest and says, "It does not appeal to me."

Let us sternly cast from us this nonsense. Let us wisely know that any recognized duty, that appeals to the vast majority of reasonable beings, will appeal to us if we give it a chance, whether now it appeals to us or not. The force of an appeal is dependent not only on the appeal; it often depends still more on the character of the soul appealed to. The same dynamite that will shatter a granite ledge makes no impression at all on a pool of muddy water. It is to our shameful discredit if duty does not appeal to us.

If bread and butter do not appeal to us, but only candy and soda water, we may know that our digestive organs are at fault, and we go to a doctor. If history and biography do not appeal to us, but only flashy novels, we may know that our intellects are weak, and have recourse to a teacher. There is a good Physician, there is a great Teacher, who can give us an appetite for strong and worthy living. Nothing can do this but allegiance to Him. "We love, because He first loved us." We love

duty because He first loved duty, and we love to do as He has done. "The expulsive power of a new affection" will alone annul unworthy likings and strengthen the noble appeals. The love that we have for our Saviour will glorify duty with privilege, and throw around it the very glamour of delight.

IV

KEEPING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF OTHERS

EVERYTHING, as Epictetus once said, has two handles. Taking hold of it by one, we find it unbearable; taking hold by the other, we discover it to be easily and pleasantly borne.

Similarly we say of a cross member of the family that he got out on the wrong side of the bed this morning. Every bed, it seems, has a wrong side as well as a right side, and it behooves us to distinguish carefully between the two.

Thus also every person has two sides, a wrong side and a right side.

We are reminded of those whom we often meet who are deaf in one ear, and if by chance we get on their deaf side, we are straightway made to move to their hearing side. Thus every person has one side on which his spiritual hearing is most acute, on which he is most responsive to words and influences from without. We are to find that side.

A friend of mine has recently injured his arm, and wears it in a splint. I often walk or ride with him, and must take pains not to get upon the side

that hurts; for if I do, I am sure to rub against it. Many a person's feelings are more easily hurt in certain directions than in others; and we are to note which arm of his spirit he carries in a sling.

Are you ambidextrous? Can you do things as well with your left hand as with your right? Doubtless there are many men who are ambidextrous, by nature or training, but I have never met them. Doubtless we might all become ambidextrous, much to our profit and the profit of the race, if we would take trouble enough; but we are far from it now. Still we shake right hands, and if now and then a man comes along who has lost his right hand and has to shake hands with his left member, the ceremony is awkward in the extreme.

Why is it, since right-handedness runs through all mankind, that we persist in fancying ourselves ambidextrous in spirit? In greeting others we are as likely to present our soul's left hand as its right, and the resultant confusion we complacently regard as no fault of ours. We perceive that we did not approach their right side; but then, we arrogantly say, they should have no right and left sides, they should be equally approachable from both sides. That is to exalt theory above universal fact.

Keeping on the right side of others depends, then, in the first place, upon the sensible recognition of this right-sidedness and left-sidedness of human nature. We are not to go at others with the indiscriminate plunge of a bulldog. We are not arro-

gantly to assert our ideas of what they should be in the face of what they are. By sympathy and love we are to put ourselves in their place. We are to gain that insight into life which is half of living. We are not to scout the currents of other lives as mere whims. We are to study them, and move our canoes along them and not athwart them. However we may wish for human uniformity, for full-orbed men and women, we are to bear in mind that such persons are the rare exceptions, and that very probably we are very far from this ideal.

Then we are not to confuse this desire to keep on the right side of others with hypocrisy. If a man carries his right arm in a sling, it is just as honest to thrust out our left hand as under other circumstances it would be to thrust out our right hand. The recognition of disability is not passing judgment upon it, still less commending it. Conforming our lives to the misfortunes of others or even to their idiosyncrasies is not a pretence, a lie, as if we were to deny their existence; it is merely to refrain from combating them. Sometimes it may be necessary to combat them, but we have the right to choose the time. Those who, in the assumed interests of frankness and courage, keep constantly on the wrong side of others, are simply shutting themselves out from the possibility of influence when the just opportunity arises for making the wrong sides right.

A sense of humour is one of the best guides to

the right side of others. Humour coincides with humility. A pompous, selfish man never has any idea of the ridiculous. A certain light-heartedness is one of the most valuable fruits of true Christianity. It lifts us above petty annoyances, it buoys us over insults, it floats us through the shallow waters of trivialities, and it enables us to catch and profit by all the winds of the Spirit. A hearty laugh, a cheery smile, the good-humoured refusal to take affront, these are impregnable shields against the porcupine darts that fly from men's wrong sides, and under shelter from them we can usually slip around to their right sides, and remain there.

But best of all aids, if we would live with men most helpfully and happily, is the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ. How promptly He found the right side of others, and how persistently He stayed there! The headstrong Peter, skeptical Thomas, fiery John and James, over-busy Martha, cautious Nicodemus, worldly Matthew, curious Zacchæus, haughty Pilate, bigoted Saul—our Lord saw the excellencies of each, and appealed to those excellencies; the New Testament is full of examples for us if we would keep on the right side of others. The Spirit of Christ, dwelling in us, will lead us into all truth; among other truths, into this most salutary truth, that every man has a lovable side, a hopeful side; and the Spirit will lead us to it, and hold us there.

V

THE ROAD TO FAILURE

NO one intentionally sets out on the road to failure. If any course were authoritatively so labeled, with even the tiniest sign-board, it would be shunned by nearly all, though it were shaded by the finest trees and bordered by the loveliest flowers. No one deliberately selects failure as his goal.

But if it is only some sentences in a book, though it were the Book of books, that mark the road to failure, they are easily overlooked. If it is only the advice of wise men, we may not hear it or attend to it. If it is only the example of others who have trod that road and shown whither it leads, we are ready to say that they merely took the wrong turn in it, and that we shall be more sagacious. There are many plausible excuses, if one wishes to take the road to failure.

And many do desire to follow it, because, for one reason, it promises pleasure and ease. It leads along a level or down hill, and all other roads lead steeply upward. "It's a mistake to think you must work so hard," its comfortable curves tell us, and the settees that border it. "If you don't, you'll get just as far in the end. Trust to luck. Look at Millions, with his one fortunate speculation. Take

things easy, keep your eyes open, and something is sure to turn up." The road says nothing about the myriad of Millions's contemporaries in poorhouses.

Others desire to follow the road to failure because of very different inducements. The designer of the road has placed along it, here and there, gleaming richly out through the trees, a number of palaces of the most magnificent design. "One of these is yours, if you go this way," the road whispers from every tree-top. "I am the road of wealth," it declares. "I am the road of power. I am the road of fame. Look at Napoleon. Look at Voltaire. Look at the Duke of Ducats. They all prospered exceedingly, in their various ways. Vast power and wide reputation and immense riches come to those that travel this road."

"But Napoleon died in exile, and Voltaire died in the darkness of hopelessness, and the Duke of Ducats is universally despised," you may say to the road to failure.

The road answers indignantly: "Is it my fault if they traveled on me too far? Why didn't they stop before they reached the bad part of me?"

What the road to failure never says is the thing most important for all men to know, namely, that the longer one travels along it, the steeper its descent becomes, and the harder it is to turn back. Moreover, on either side is an impenetrable forest, full of wild beasts. The traveler is caught in a trap. The end of that road is death.

Perhaps this allegory is as old as man's ability to make a road and walk along it; certainly it is as old as literature. But the oldest truths are the fundamental ones, and nothing is surer than that every man finds open before him two courses, one of them leading to success and the other to failure.

Old and obvious as this truth is, most men constantly and disastrously overlook it. They walk heedlessly along the nearest and easiest road. So far as they know or care, there is no other road to travel. The most characteristic bit of modern slang is "I should worry!"

There is one peculiarity of the road to failure, and this is that, though it is very hard to leave, it is very easy to enter. One can enter it any day, from any direction, at any place. Every enterprise we may undertake branches off into the road to failure; and if we want to go that way, we may. All these passageways end in turnstiles strictly rachetted: we may go into the road to failure, but the turnstiles will not revolve backward.

Many things favour the road to failure and all the side roads leading into it. It was Josh Billings, was it not, who once remarked that when a man starts tumbling down hill everything seems greased for the occasion? There is a strong wind blowing along these ways, always toward failure. It is no trouble at all to go with it; turn in the opposite way, and you must buffet a gale.

The road to failure is one of the most insidious

and crafty ways in the world. It changes its character by absolutely imperceptible degrees. The air grows foul, but so slowly that the traveler does not know that it is no longer fresh and pure; he becomes wonted to it, would not feel at home in any other air. One by one the flowers drop away from the roadside, and in their place are the waving heads of serpents and the tangles of poisonous vines; but the traveler does not realize that the flowers have been replaced by serpents; the serpents have become his flowers. Gradually the fine houses become less frequent until they cease altogether, and in their stead dark masses of rock rise ominously, the lair of the wildcat and the lynx; but the traveler has forgotten the palaces, and his spirit has come to be at home in the gloom. The road to failure molds the spirit of man irresistibly into its own sad likeness.

There is only one safety with regard to this dangerous road, and that is to keep out of it altogether. We may have a Guide. He not only knows the way, but He is the Way. He not only leads us to success, but He is Success. Being with Him is to reach our haven. Knowing Him is to succeed. And even if we have erred from the true way, even if we are far along on the road to failure, there is one thing we can do. We can shout for the Guide. We can call upon Him in our dark and deep distress. He will hear. He will come. And He will lead us out.

VI

THE DUTY OF BEING PLEASANT

IF it is our duty to add to the happiness of the world, certainly it is our duty to be pleasant, for in that way we can contribute to the joy of our fellow beings more substantially, on the whole, than in any other way.

Of course a great genius like Carlyle, even if he is crabbed, makes a magnificent gift to mankind in his books; but all who know what a sour life he led find less satisfaction in "Sartor Resartus" and "Heroes and Hero-Worship" than they would if he had been a kindly man like Phillips Brooks.

Whatever may be said of exceptional men and women, however, there can be no doubt that for ordinary, every-day living, pleasantness is a more valuable trait than shrewd philosophy, good business judgment, massive energy, or even generosity. There are few whom you meet that you can aid with money, but you can help every one with pleasantness. You will not find many opportunities for the useful display of an acute intellect, but every hour of the day and almost every minute you can delight others with pleasantness. Not many of the world's enterprises will submit themselves to

your executive guidance, but you can have at any time the chairmanship of a committee on pleasantness, a committee of one. Even the universal duty and privilege of love has few chances for its intimate and active exercise compared with the duty and privilege of being pleasant.

But while it is easy to find opportunities for being pleasant, the being pleasant is not so easy. All the world is hungry for it, the demand is enormous, but the supply is lamentably small. Look at the next crowd you enter, and you will find that most of the faces are depressing. They show discontent, peevishness, moodiness, harshness. Eyes are dull, mouth corners are down, voices are querulous, gestures are nervous, bearing is spiritless. If you want to enter an occupation that is not overcrowded, try what some one has called "the cheering-up business."

This scarcity of pleasantness is caused by the inherent difficulty of the thing. We are likely to think that pleasantness is a natural gift, but it is usually painstakingly acquired. We are likely to believe that pleasantness is a rather cheap and trivial accomplishment, to be gained by any one offhand, and not to be compared for a minute with skill on the piano, for instance, or with the power to make an eloquent speech. But many a noted pianist has been an egotistical nuisance, and many a strong orator has been a boor and a bully. Indeed, some that have achieved great results in other

fields of human endeavour have lamented their unpopularity, have sought to be pleasant, and have found that all their genius could not compass it.

This is because uniform pleasantness requires a mental balance, a spiritual discipline, a wealth of character, that are the fruit of the most ardent striving, the resultant of the finest attributes of the soul. Any one can be pleasant to the pleasant, pleasant under favourable circumstances, pleasant when one feels like it; but the test is usually quite otherwise, to be pleasant with the disagreeable, pleasant under trying circumstances, pleasant when one feels cross and wretched and horrid. Pleasantness is not like a light struck from flint and tinder, which will flash out if the tinder is dry, and the flint is hard, and the wind is still, and the wood is quickly combustible, and the hand is skillful and steady; pleasantness is like the electric flash-light, the product of much thought and toil, instantly available and thoroughly efficient.

No one can be really pleasant if one is selfish, and unselfishness is the summit of character attainment. Pleasantness lives in the lives of others. Pleasantness takes to itself the entire definition of love in First Corinthians 13. Pleasantness, in fact, is the beautiful garment of love, it is the winsome exterior of a kindly soul.

That is why one of the most praiseful epitaphs ever written is the famous one, "She was so pleasant." Those four words paint a life that kings and

queens might well have envied. We know that "she" was beautiful, gentle, graceful, and universally beloved. We know that "she" was widely influential. We know that "she" is honoured among the angels in heaven.

Therefore no one can set for himself or herself a worthier task than this of pleasantness. The effort to be pleasant is vastly gainful. It enriches for time and for eternity. It makes solid and rapid accretions of friends, opportunities, and powers. Whatever work we undertake is made easier by pleasantness. And with all this addition to our own happiness we are making large additions to the happiness of those around us.

Yes, pleasantness, like all other good things, is hard to attain, but it becomes constantly easier. It is a delightful momentum. Once set in motion, it takes care of itself, and increases its force with the passing of time. It is discovered to be vastly pleasant to be pleasant. We get an appetite for it. We enjoy it and look forward to opportunities for it. Society becomes ever more attractive, friendships ever more delightful. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given," and of few matters is this so gloriously true as of pleasantness.

And finally, pleasantness is contagious. One pleasant person will in time make a whole office full of grouchy people pleasant. Pleasantness is an irresistible leaven. Pleasantness is a radiating warmth. Pleasantness is a light that cannot be

hidden. Pleasantness partakes of the fructifying power of Christ from whom it comes.

It is to Him that we go for our pleasantness. No one can be pleasant in his own strength, because no one can be unselfish in his own strength. He is our Pleasantness, in proportion as He becomes our Self, He in us and we in Him, that His Pleasantness may be perfected in us.

VII

PRAYER AND TEMPTATION

FORTUNATELY, since temptation is so common and perilous an experience, aids against it are quite as common, and very powerful. The tempted man can flee to good books, to his friends and loved ones, to God's clean, strong outdoors. Philosophy aids him, precious memories aid him, his self-respect aids him. The church in its many agencies, society in many of its aspects, government with its laws and penalties, all help him to keep in the right path. But these numerous and powerful assistants are even jointly less than prayer in such an emergency. The Bible is less efficacious here than prayer, because it needs to be explained by prayer, and forced home by communion with God.

Prayer is the best resource against temptation, for one reason, because it is most convenient. At the time when temptation assails us we may be alone; no helpful book may be at hand, or even the Bible, and we may have no well-stored Bible memory; the temptation may come in the dead of night, and many temptations do come in such periods of solitude or isolation. But however distant or inaccessible other helps may be, prayer is always an instant possibility. If we have trained ourselves in

the habit of prayer, it is the refuge to which we flee instinctively. The prayer need not be long; ejaculatory prayer is often the most powerful prayer. It need not be eloquent; often the homelier it is, the more effective it is. Prayer is not locked in with a single restriction. It is free as breathing, and as easily natural. It is a perfectly ready resource in all times of spiritual danger.

Not only is prayer always at hand, but it is always a delightful resource, and so the more likely to be used. What is pleasanter than talking with a dear friend? What is more comforting than taking troubles to one whose love and sympathy, whose power and helpfulness, have been abundantly proved? Only a little real experience of the blessedness of prayer is needed to make it the greatest joy of our lives. As the wayworn traveler sinks with a sigh of pleasure into the comfortable chair at the inn, so on our life journey we reach the inn of prayer and get the refreshment for which we long.

Prayer is not only a ready and delightful resource, but it is a reasonable one. What is more certain than that a father will not see his child assailed by an enemy or in peril on the brink of a precipice and fail to rescue him? Is our heavenly Father less loving than the earthly fathers He has made? We know that He is everywhere. We know that His knowledge of us is immediate and complete. We know that He loves us with a perfect love. Why, then, is not the doctrine of achieving prayer the

most logical of doctrines? Indeed, if God did not hasten to rescue His tempted children, then the very structure of the universe would tumble about our ears, and our minds would welter in a chaos of doubt. With entire exactness the truth of prevailing prayer may be said to be the foundation of the stately edifice of human reason and divine certainty. If it is not a fact, there are no facts.

But, some may ask, granting God's knowledge of us, granting His fatherly desire to help us when we are tempted, can He do so? Can even God make a man good against his will?

Assuredly not, for that would reduce a man to a mere tool in God's hands. Man's free will to do wrong is as much an essential of his responsible manhood as his free will to do right. God cannot, even in answer to prayer, compel a tempted man to resist his temptation, and force upon him purity and righteousness. But the very fact of prayer implies that God's help is in accordance with our human will and not against it. It may be a very poor prayer, just a weak flutter of an indecisive hand out toward the Rescuer; but it is a mighty token none the less. It means that in the depths of his heart the man does not wish to sin, does recognize his own powerlessness against sin, does wish God's help in the emergency. A mother answers the feeble cry of a sick child even more quickly than the sturdy shriek of a well boy or girl; and the more nearly our temptation has us in its deadly grip, the

more difficult we find it to send a full-throated cry up to God, by so much the more certain is he to speed to our assistance; for he sees that we are in desperate straits.

We must never forget that we are not praying to a cold, passionless, distant Deity, but to a God who has come down into our storm-tossed humanity, who has met all its trying conditions, and who has been tempted in all points like as we are, overcoming all these temptations. No temptation will befall us beyond what we are able to bear, because He, our brother, was able to bear them all, and His power is available for us. In all our temptations He has made a way of escape. He is the Way.

Live with Christ, then, if you would overcome the Evil One. Live with Christ, the Redeemer dwelling in you. So live with Him that communion with Him will be inevitable. So commune with Him that living with Him will be inevitable. Read of Him, in long drafts. Think of Him, with unwearied delight. Talk about Him, gladly communing with His other children. Make prayer indeed your vital breath, your native air. Temptation will come without warning; make prayer an instinct. Temptation will come in almost irresistible power; make prayer a mightier power in your life. Lean upon prayer with confident trust; it will never fail you, till the final victory has been won, and temptations vanish for evermore.

VIII

PRETENCES THAT PAY

IS it ever right to pretend to like persons that one does not like? The advocates and practicers of perfect frankness declare that one's feelings toward others should always be on the surface. In the interest of truth, therefore, they become the most disagreeable folks in the community. Their sharp tongues give fifty wounds a day. If they think your face is ugly, they tell you so. If they believe you conceited, they call you conceited. If they despise you, they make you realize their scorn in two minutes. This, they think, is being finely frank and boldly honest.

But it is not. Such conduct is born of the very conceit it so freely condemns. It supposes that its own judgment, often hasty and without real discernment, is the true judgment. Even if it were true, it takes it for granted that the truth should always be spoken.

On the contrary, the truth should often be concealed, especially disagreeable truth, because by concealing it, and acting as if the happy opposite were truth, that opposite is most likely to become truth. If you do not like a person, saying you do

not like him and acting out your dislike merely perpetuate your disinclination to friendship; and if the other has qualities justifying aversion, your frank hostility makes him still uglier than he was. Those that go through the world in a friendly attitude toward others, even toward those whom they dislike, very frequently justify their temporary pretence by coming to like them. Cordiality proves to be the sunshine in which unsuspected flowers of character lift up their heads and blossom into beauty.

Of course this does not mean that it is ever right to condone wickedness. Frank and courageous denunciation of evil is the duty of every Christian. But we are considering rather those personal whims and feelings upon which most of us lay so much stress, those instinctive aversions which we exalt into life guides, those petty suspicions and finicky tastes and fastidious preferences which we allow to dominate our friendships and even our acquaintances. Cast them to the winds! Until the contrary is plain as daylight, treat all men as brothers. The response, in the case of most men, will be a royal brotherhood.

Of similar nature is the manifestation of interest in a sermon or other address. The attitude and whole appearance of many auditors seem to say to the preacher or speaker: "Here I am; make me listen to you if you can. I expect to be bored. You must do your best, if you keep me awake."

That is sufficiently depressing to spoil an oration by Daniel Webster. On the other hand, what speaker is not kindled by an eager face, a countenance alight with sympathetic feeling and ardent expectation? "This must be the speech of my life," says the speaker to himself, "if only to please that friendly auditor." Even if you do expect to be bored, you assure yourself of boredom by making your expectation evident; while a brief pretence of interested attention will usually pass speedily into an attention that is wholly unfeigned.

Similarly, though we should go to church, take part in the prayer meetings, join in the church work, because we love Jesus Christ and love His service, it is well for those of us that do not feel that love to serve Christ at first merely from a sense of duty. In the early days of Christian Endeavour, before it had become an accepted agency of the Kingdom, critics were busy with the Christian Endeavour pledge. "What!" they cried. "Speak in prayer meeting every week, whether one feels like it or not? That is to reduce religion to formalism and Pharisaism. That is to have an external piety instead of an inward affection for Christ and His Church."

The criticism would be just if the prayer-meeting testimony stopped with words, if it had no effect on the life of the speaker as well as the lives of the hearers. But it is forever true that the doing of any right act from a sense of duty, faithfully and

persistently, soon gives birth to a love for that service, a joy and pride in it, so that we cease to do it from a sense of duty and do it now in the fullness of happy desire. The quickest way to attain any affection for what is noble is to live lives as near as possible to what they would be if we had that affection.

A good illustration of this principle is the matter of giving. Of course the ideal gift springs from a real interest in the cause to which we give; but suppose we do not feel that interest, are good causes to be neglected by us? That would be to close our hearts and purses forever against them. Giving is a path to interest, and a sure path. Thousands have become devoted lovers of missions because they responded, perhaps very unwillingly, to some appeal from the pulpit, and gave merely because others were giving and they were ashamed not to join in. It is a most unworthy motive, but the deed has put them in line for a motive entirely worthy. Where their treasure has gone their hearts soon follow. They have become part owners of India, China, the rescue mission in the near-by city, and it is human nature to look after one's investment. Giving for a lower reason leads to giving for a higher reason, and ultimately for the highest.

The principle may even be applied to the crowning act of life, the act of prayer. What Christian, setting out reluctantly on the pathway of divine communion, because of habit only, or perhaps be-

cause of his church covenant, but has felt in a few minutes a glow in his heart, a melting sorrow for sin, the kindling of new aspirations and longings, and has run to meet his Saviour and throw himself at His pierced feet? The prayer for each one of us is, "I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." We have only the feeble beginnings of any nobility; we will act as if we had the whole, and, trusting in Christ to help, we soon shall have the nobleness in its blessed entirety. It will be a pretence that has richly paid.

IX

LIFE'S PROUD PROSPECTUSES

A CERTAIN editor had this experience. He obtained from a humourous writer of national reputation the promise of a serial story. This writer had never before produced a serial, or, indeed, a short story, and it was thought that the announcement of his first work of fiction, since he was widely popular, would attract much attention and bring in many subscriptions.

But the writer did not live up to his promise. The distracted editor wrote him repeatedly as the months passed, reminding him of the serial, telling him what hopes his paper had based upon it, and how extensively it had been advertised. The writer was ready with additional pledges, he even set the day when the manuscript should be in the editor's hands, but no sheet of "copy" ever appeared. Finally the editor's expostulation failed to bring even a reply, and all expectation of the serial was abandoned.

Then came a surprise. In spite of the writer's fame and the wide advertisement of his "first serial," no one in all the land seemed to remember it, or wrote to inquire why it was not forthcoming. The paper pursued its even course unmoved by the

failure, its subscription list as large—or as small—as before. Evidently that item of its prospectus, at least, had fallen completely flat.

Other experiences, of a similar nature though not so striking, have led that editor to distrust prospectuses. He has come to believe that the success or failure of a periodical depends upon its weekly or monthly performance, steady, unheralded, modest, but convincing. Its readers grow into a liking for it as they grow into a liking for a human friend, not by a glaring announcement of what it will do, but by the slow accumulation of pleasant and profitable memories. It is what such a friend has done, whether a living friend or a paper friend, that makes up his hold upon us.

That editor now values the saying of Richard Watson Gilder, the distinguished editor of *The Century,* who, when asked how he made up a number of his magazine, replied simply, "I go into my garden and pluck a nosegay." By this he meant that to compose a number he took up here and there from his store of accepted manuscripts what he thought would combine together most pleasurably. He turned out a number that was fragrant with *The Century's* fragrance that its readers had come to enjoy, and colorful with *The Century's* point and vivacity. If he had done the work by schedule, by a sort of florist's prospectus, he would have spoiled it all. Gilder was both poet and publicist. The poet kept close to God and the publicist kept close

to the people. It is the right combination for the making of a life as well as of a magazine.

How often in life we are surprised by the failure of our prospectuses, our proud expectations and plans and promises, while some little unplanned-for, unexpected word or deed "makes a big hit"! It is thus that Julia Ward Howe dashed off "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" after visiting a soldier's camp, never dreaming that that "song in the night," which it literally was, would prove to be her great contribution to the history of her country. Who imagines that Lincoln knew, when he penned his brief speech on the way to the Gettysburg cemetery, that those few sentences would outlast and outweigh all his other addresses combined? "Wife! Wife!" cried Oliver Wendell Holmes, plunging across the hall after dashing off "The Chambered Nautilus," "I have written something better than I can write!" He had indeed excelled himself.

These illustrations are all drawn from literature, but they prove the close and necessary connection between literature and life. Carried further, they would show the vital relation of all great deeds to life. What is famous, memorable, permanent, in the world and its history, is an outflowing of strong and beautiful living, and can no more be planned for than the blossoming of flowers. They are not part of a prospectus, they are part of the expanding summer, they are an outgrowth of nature's order, they are inevitable.

This unexpectedness of true success does not mean, of course, that it is all or even partly a matter of chance. Rather, it is more certainly a conclusion of firmest law. If by our shrewd contriving and our blatant promises we could commandeer success, if a prospectus could make a popular magazine or a resultful life, then audacity would indeed be king, and dash and boast would triumph to the dismay of steady goers. If big type, flaunting assertions, and daring claims built up a magazine, a book, a breakfast food, or a man, then a dictionary of synonyms and an advertising agency would be the sufficient open sesame to fortune. But God's providence takes strict account of the contents of the magazine or book, the taste and digestibility of the food, and the wearing qualities of the man, and of nothing else. Aside from these, advertisements absolutely do not count.

It is all a most happy encouragement of serene, intelligent, modest, constant performance. Ambitions knock over their own ladders. Clamour drowns its own reverberations. Glaring advertisement, by its gaudy colours and its extravagant assertions and its maddening iterations, dulls eye and ear to its appeals. The world is framed for humility and quiet industry. The still, small voice is the voice of God and of God's people. Prospectuses are of far less value than retrospectuses. Every one of life's prizes is won by honest living, and it is vain to seek them in any other way.

X

HOLY HEALTH

"HOLY" is by derivation the same word as "healthy." A "holy" man is a "whole" man, and a "whole" man is a "healed" man. Bible English is full of illustrations of this history of the two words.

To speak of "holy health" is therefore tautological, as one would say "holy holiness" or "healthy health." But who thinks of this? Many readers probably think that I am linking together two incongruous ideas when I entitle this chapter "Holy Health."

If every one regarded health as holy there would be far more healthy persons and far more holy persons. The Bible so regards it. "Your body," wrote Paul, "is a temple of the Holy Spirit . . . . glorify God therefore in your body"; "The temple of God is holy, and such are ye."

Now we defile the temple of God by sin, by any sin; and is not misuse of the body a sin? The human body is the most wonderful thing that God has created. Upon it He has lavished His most marvelous handiwork. The brain is God's masterpiece; the eye comes close to it in splendour of achievement. The hand is the most efficient of all tools, the diges-

tive and circulatory system the most efficient of all engines. One could study the human body a long lifetime and scarcely enter the portal of its glories. The body of the lowest savage in Africa or Australia is a more resplendent temple than Solomon's, more beautiful than the Parthenon. To abuse it or misuse it is the most beastly vandalism.

More than that, the human body is Christ's only instrument for getting His work done in the world. Through our hands His blessed hands must reach out aid to all the needy. Upon our feet He must speed on all His errands of love. His Holy Spirit can act directly upon the hearts of men; but in material manifestations, even in oral speech, He has limited Himself to what He can do through the bodies of His followers. What confining! What a handicap! And how necessary it is that we should not blunt His instrument, or weaken it in any way! In this view of the matter, how holy is health!

We may almost be said to be priests of health, looking at this sacred aspect of it; looking also at its relation to our own work, we may be said to be stewards of our health, even as we are stewards of our money. For health is money. Health is work, and all the results that come from work. To be careless of health is to be heedless of labour, often to make labour impossible.

Scrupulous cleanliness of teeth and frequent visits to the dentist may seem time foolishly taken from our tasks. It will not require many fits of dyspep-

sia or of the toothache to show us that it was time given to our tasks. We steal hours from our proper sleep in order to advance our work, and discover, perhaps too late, that thereby we have been fearfully retarding our work. We snatch hasty lunches that we may hurry back to our business, and by this procedure before long we may take ourselves away from business altogether. We worry ourselves into a headache or into nervous exhaustion, and so we get something more to worry about. We cannot afford daily exercise and recreation, and so we afford doctors' bills that are ten times as costly. When we can no longer remedy matters we find out that the reason why health is holy is because it allows us to do the work which God has set before us in this world, and do it in the way that God approves.

Therefore health is something to pray over; and that not when sickness comes—we are quick to pray then!—but while we are in the full tide of physical existence. Health is something to thank God for daily, and consult with God about it every day. We should hold our relation to our health as a part of our religion. We should eat and drink, bathe and exercise, sleep and rest, all to the glory of God.

Most of us, nowadays, are faddists in this matter of health. We observe one law of our bodies strenuously, and therewith absolve ourselves from all other laws. We are quacks of hygiene, considering a single phase of right regimen as a panacea. It may be that we practise Fletcherism, and by this vigourous

and righteous chewing excuse ourselves for late hours and overwork and no exercise. We make an all-sufficient physical virtue of eating no meat. Or, we are devotees of golf, and eighteen holes a day are supposed to carry us over the ruin of gluttony.

No, no! Health is whole-th, in fact as well as etymologically. Our whole body is to be full of light. Disease will enter through the least unguarded crevice. As I write, I am myself just recovering from a severe sickness lasting for more than half a year, with three months in the hospital and a series of dangerous surgical operations, just because infection found its way into an abrasion on my ankle. Our safe ideal is nothing less than health as nearly perfect as is possible for us, health maintained at that high standard by painstaking effort.

We are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Shall we allow the stained-glass windows to be cracked? Shall we let the foundations crumble, and allow fissures to appear in the walls, and permit the towers to bend from the perpendicular? Shall we endure torn carpets and muddy floors and dusty woodwork and an organ out of tune? This is not a metaphor, it is fact, as we shall sadly learn some day if we do not realize it now. We are rapidly nearing the world wherein spiritual realities are the only realities, and we might as well get ready for it. One of the ways of getting ready for it is by regarding this earthly tabernacle as wholly God's, and its health as holy.

XI

HOW TO WORK

HERE are ten rules for work. They do not pretend to be complete, or even to be the chief rules for work (though some of them are among the chief); but they are all good rules, the observance of which will make any labour easier and more successful.

1. *Enjoy Your Work.* "How can I," you ask, "if it is not work in harmony with my tastes and abilities?" The answer is twofold. Most of us have some choice in the matter, at least at the start. We need not take up the first job that chance throws in our way. We can study ourselves, and find work suited to our powers and inclinations. Effort in discovering our proper task at the start will save us much disagreeable and futile effort later on.

And in addition, if a distasteful task is forced upon us, we can learn to like it. Happiness is a matter of the heart and not of circumstances. If we do our work well, we shall come to take pride in it. Happiness is a part of all well-earned wages.

2. *Plan Your Work.* Haphazard toil is never successful toil. Work moves best according to a schedule. The methodical man reels off a dozen

tasks while the unsystematic worker is fumbling with one. A well-made plan is already halfway to the goal. It is possible to make poor plans, but even a poor plan is better than none. Plans are valuable in slight jobs, they are invaluable in great tasks. One of the finest of the old-fashioned phrases is "the plan of salvation"; if God needed a plan for this greatest of all undertakings, surely we need one for our lesser work.

3. *Work with an Eye on Eternity.* It is a poor plan that looks only a day ahead; the best plans look all days ahead. As every deed, however slight, has its eternal effects, every deed should be entered upon with thought for its endless results. Work that is seen to be profitably related to eternity is entered upon with enthusiasm and followed up with zest. If last hour does not fit finely into eternity, it was a wasted hour.

4. *Learn Your Job.* There is a best way to do everything, and the second-best way is almost infinitely below it. The intelligent worker is twice a worker. Study as long as you please on the smallest task, there will still remain much to learn about it, and it will be well worth learning. These are days of keen competition, but the competition is all among the intelligent; ignorance is out of the running before it starts.

5. *Work Serenely.* Worry switches your efforts off upon the wrong track. Calmness doubles all your powers. Trust in yourself, in your fellows,

and in God, is fire under the boiler, wind on the sail, electricity in the wire. Napoleon won his victories because he knew he could; you can do the same.

6. *Work Steadily.* Plod is not a showy nag, but it is a sure one, it arrives. There is only one road to Getting-through-it and that is Keeping-at-it Street. Don't expect to make up for half speed by double speed. In running an automobile twice as fast the driver must use more than twice as much gasoline, not to speak of racking the machine. Spurts of all kinds are expensive; in the end, they are useless. There is always a loss that more than counterbalances the gain. The only profitable way to run an engine or a life is a steady plod, neither too fast nor too slow.

7. *Work Creatively.* However humdrum your task, however commonplace, however many millions of men have done it before, you can put into it something new, you can be a creator, an originator. You can develop some feature of value. You can make the task wear a novel aspect, to yourself if not to others. You can be a Columbus of that task, and set sail in it to fresh continents of achievement. You can have the zest of discovery, which will make new work of old jobs. That is why God keeps on working, and you can share the zeal of the Creator.

8. *Work Persistently.* Failing is for scaling—failures are simply obstacles to climb over. If you

can't get over them, you can get around them. When you have made sure that you are right, you have made sure that you may succeed. Study the history of the achievers, and you will be ashamed of your faltering. Most of them overcame daily more difficulties than you meet in a year. More courage is needed off the battle-field than on it. Cultivate the dogged perseverance that wins wars, and you will come off more than conqueror.

9. *Work with Others.* There is something about every task, often many things, which call for other workers. If they are not to aid the work directly, they must aid indirectly by suggestions and praise. No man worketh to himself alone. This means, of course, that you will give to others the aid you expect to receive from them. It means that you will never feel lonely in your work, but will be stimulated and upheld by the consciousness that you are one of a vast army of working brothers. And what you could never do by yourself the army can readily accomplish.

10. *Work in Harmony with the Divine Worker.* We say confidently, "Where there is a will there is a way"; but there is no way except as our will agrees with God's will, and we are walking in God's way. Whatever God wants us to do, we can do. Whatever He does not want us to do, we shall miserably fail in, whether we recognize that fact at the time or not. Christ was more successful than any other worker that ever lived on earth, and He could

say that He always did the things that pleased God. In proportion as we can honestly say that, our work will be happy, and will be crowned with all success.

XII

CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY

"PHILANTHROPY" is one of the finest words of the English language. Really it is not of the English language, but of the Greek, and it means "love of man," just as "misanthropy" means "hatred of man." In a sadly snobbish fashion we are coming to define a philanthropist as a rich man who gives away part of his money, but a philanthropist may be a very poor man. Philanthropy has nothing to do, primarily, with giving; it has to do with loving. A rich man may give away a hundred million dollars; but if he does not love mankind, he is not a philanthropist in any fair sense of the word. A poor man may give away one dollar, or he may not have a cent to give away; and yet, if his heart is full of love to mankind, if he longs to give to them, and if he does what he can to help them, he is a philanthropist. It would be one of the finest of social services if we could restore this noble word to its noble significance, for no other word can take its place.

It would be foolish to say that there were no philanthropists, no humanity-lovers, before Christ's day. Joseph was such a lover, so was David, so was Socrates; but it would be exactly true to say that

Christ introduced a new meaning into philanthropy, and exalted it to a power and glory undreamed before, while at the same time He increased enormously the number of real philanthropists in the world. So profound was this development that we may almost say that philanthropy began in the world with the establishment of Christian philanthropy.

What is this Christian philanthropy? And how does it differ from the philanthropy of the Greeks and Romans and even of the Old Testament? In a word, it is love of mankind *as brothers.* It is the swift and glad deduction from the Christian doctrine of the fatherhood of God, and the sonship of Jesus Christ, the Elder Brother of us all. It is the practical conclusion from the belief that God has made of one blood all races and tribes, all classes and conditions of men.

Non-Christian philanthropy bestows as a feudal chief, almost as a being of another race; Christian philanthropy bestows as a brother. Non-Christian philanthropy hands down, as from a throne; Christian philanthropy hands out, on a brotherly level. Non-Christian philanthropy oversees, with a spy-glass; Christian philanthropy lives with its unfortunate brothers. Non-Christian philanthropy is egotistical, overbearing, dictatorial; Christian philanthropy is humble, gentle, seeking the light.

Now it is only fair to acknowledge that the non-Christian type of philanthropy exists, and even

flourishes, in Christian lands. Few of us go far without encountering it. Some very conspicuous examples have arisen during recent years. Men endure it because of the good it does in spite of its defects. Men fawn upon it and flatter it so that it never realizes its defects. Yet its existence is a constant warning to Christianity, a constant challenge, and even an abiding menace.

Non-Christian philanthropy arises in Christian lands whenever men of wealth receive Christian ideals with their heads and not their hearts, as a duty and not a privilege, and follow those ideals as overlords and not as the humble servants of Jesus Christ and loving ministrants to Christ's brothers and their own. Entered upon in this spirit, with motives in which personal pride and ambition are noticeably mingled, philanthropy is quite likely to do more harm than good, because it is not genuine philanthropy at all.

Christian philanthropy, on the other hand, must ever watch lest it fall into this pit. Sometimes it starts, as did several of the monkish orders, with a true lowliness, a real self-sacrifice, a genuine spirit of Christian brotherhood; but, becoming its brothers' keeper, with the power over its brothers that this implies, it falls away into the very domineering pride and boastful ambition and haughty intolerance that are the opposites of Christian philanthropy. The history of those monkish orders is a perfect illustration of this danger.

Now since Christian philanthropy is what it has been defined as being, something entirely within the reach of every Christian and something of the very essence of Christianity, what Christian should not become a philanthropist? No money is needed, no skill or special ability is needed, nothing is needed but Christlike love. Love brings wisdom. Love gets in some way what money is required. Love itself is usually all that is required, being the greatest thing in the world and worth all the gold that ever was coined.

Perhaps the times in which we are living call more earnestly and piteously for Christian philanthropy than times ever have called before. Poverty, the world over, is intense; it never was more bitter; it is going to be greater long before it is less. Hatreds are rampant everywhere, class hatreds, caste hatreds, racial hatreds, and now the vast hatred which has divided the world into two warring hosts.

Against all this physical and spiritual misery Christian philanthropy ranges itself instantly; nothing but Christian philanthropy will ever make the world again a place worth living in. The need of it is deeper than even the church yet realizes.

Indeed, the need is so vast as to be benumbing. How can we ever, asks the Christian, get power enough to meet it? And the answer is that each Christian's responsibility extends only as far as his own personality extends or may be made to ex-

tend. Beyond that is happily in mightier hands. But within that little realm each Christian is supreme. And if every Christian is merely one philanthropist, the swiftly rising tide of Christian philanthropy will soon cover the entire earth with its healing and purifying flood. We are not to wait upon one another. We are not to tarry for organization, or printed pledges, or words of command. We have our organization, the church of Christ. We have our pledges, which we made when we joined the church. And we have our word of command, ringing down the centuries from Him who alone could give it: "Lovest thou me?" "Love one another."

XIII

ON HAVING A GOOD TIME

A "GOOD TIME" is well named—it must be good. A hilarious time is not necessarily a "good" time; neither is a sportive time, nor an expensive time, nor a brilliant time. Much planning may fail to make a "good" time; keen intellects, high spirits, rich surroundings, jolly comrades, may not compass it. A "good" time must be good.

This cuts out from a good time all that is sinful. Malicious slander, frothy gossip, bitter sarcasm, do not contribute to any good time. Intoxicating liquor never helps on a good time. Hazing is not a good time, nor is gambling, nor are "joy rides."

Good times are not only good, but they make better; that is, good times are good for something. The test of a good time to-day is to-morrow. A headache on Tuesday denies a good time on Monday; so does an uneasy conscience. On the other hand, a good time is proved by a better time, by more alert minds, stronger bodies, purer and happier souls.

Good times happen, they are seldom planned for. Many persons spend so much time and pains getting ready for good times that they never have them. Good times are sequels to good work. Neglected

tasks vitiate good times. The best pleasures take us unawares, and all their parties are surprise parties.

How commonly men forget that good times must be good, is seen in the frequent shrinking from becoming a Christian, in the fear that the act will prevent all good times in the future. Really, growing good is the only way to grow happy. Joining the church is joining the world's most blessed social institution as well as its great religious organization. It is the non-Christians that do not have good times.

Since all these things are true, it follows that one of the best ways of having a good time is to make others have a good time. Unselfishness is the root of all enjoyment. Who ever ended a party given to little children without a glow at his heart? Who ever came away from a home of poverty, having emptied there a full basket, with a step that was not buoyant, a soul that was not singing? The helpful people are the joyful people. The road to happiness leads by your neighbour's door.

If these suggestions seem too altruistic, almost forbidding, whoever holds that opinion thereby shows himself out of practice in Christianity. Christ said that He came to earth in order to put His joy into men, and His is the only joy worth while. It is not a pallid, languid, monastic joy, but the full-blooded rejoicing of little children, of hearty athletes, of boon companions. No romping is more

jovial, no laughter more infectious, no game more exhilarating, than the Christian's joy.

Years ago Dr. F. B. Meyer wrote a little article on Christmas, and this great Christian preacher and author spoke in the most human way of his desire to spend Christmas simply in romping with the children, getting down on the floor and rolling over and over, and in other ways going back to his childhood. That is the spirit of hearty merriment which animates God's children, however old. Their dignity is not oppressive, their learning does not weigh them down, their holiness is as the dazzling white garment of a holiday. The more holy they are, the better time they insist on having.

Another word besides "good" needs to be emphasized in the phrase, "Having a good time," and that is "having." A good time is a possession, a lasting possession. We have it, and hold it. What are falsely called good times may be distinguished from the genuine good times by their transient nature. We experience the "good time" and then forget all about it, or remember it with sorrow and disgust and shame. We do not "have" it; it "has" us. But times that are really good are good for all time. We think of them years afterwards, and always with a thrill and a glow of delight. They become permanent factors in our living. We "have" them.

It is right to wish thus to have good times. It is right to desire the strength and ardour they give for our tasks, and it is right to desire them for their

own sake. Our Father in heaven is eager to give good things to those that ask Him, including good times, just because He wants us to be happy.

But it is foolish to expect these good times except in accordance with their own laws. The miner would know better than to go to Ohio for gold-bearing rock, the farmer would know better than to plant an orange grove in Maine, and yet we are continually expecting good times under circumstances that violate all these laws of a good time which we have been discussing. We try to raise a crop of good times from the soil of selfishness. We try to blast good times from the rock of ungodliness. And we are constantly disappointed in these efforts, and wonder why we cannot be happy.

On the other hand, it is the easiest thing in the world to have good times if we observe their laws. Seeking thus, we are sure to find; knocking thus at the door of Joy, it is promptly opened to us. "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?" Christ said to a foolish inquirer; "One there is who is good." In Him are all good times. Find His will (and it is most plainly set forth); do His will (and the doing is not difficult, since He will aid you); and you, like Paul, will have all things and abound.

Since joy is placed within the reach of all of us, and since it is so fruitful in power and usefulness, is a good time less than the happy duty of every one?

XIV

BIBLE-SATURATED MEN

WHEN a sponge is full of water, press it at any point and it gives out the water. A saturated sponge is a prepared sponge, ready for any sponge emergency.

Thus also a Bible-saturated man is a ready man. For every pressure of fate he has a reply of inward wisdom and power. He is never at a loss for comfort or sustaining. "These things have I spoken unto you," said Christ, "that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." This filling comes to the Bible-saturated man, a fullness of joy that the world cannot give, and certainly cannot take away.

Bible saturation is very different from the thin dribble of Bible that satisfies most of us, a sort of Bible dampness that requires the pressure of some terrific calamity to squeeze out a drop of sacred thought. Bible saturation is good for the daily toil and the daily pleasure. It gives us a Wednesday and Thursday Bible as well as a Sunday Bible. It makes the Bible our meat and drink, our homely meal, and not our occasional medicine.

No one will become a Bible-saturated man until he learns the necessity of the Bible. They say that death from thirst is the most agonizing of all deaths;

but lack of the water of life is stupefying rather than agonizing, and death from this cause is merely spiritual coma. Men are driven to the Bible by understanding their need of it. Their observation must show them what strength other men get from it. Their consciences must show them their own sinfulness and weakness. Their wills must lead them to make trial of the Bible satisfactions. The more they use the Bible the more clearly they will see that they cannot afford to do without it.

Bible saturation, of course, is a slow process. There is no such thing as mastering the Bible; it must master you. A charlatan who should advertise to teach the Bible in ten easy lessons would be laughed at by the world. Sorrow must teach the Bible, failure must teach it, joy and labour and human brotherhood must teach it, and all the blessed and difficult experiences of mortal life. Time goes into the process of Bible saturation, and painstaking, and much thoughtfulness. Only a patient man can become a man of the Book.

Wise method must go into the process of Bible saturation. Many of us know little about the Bible because we do not seek that knowledge in a way that would bring us any other knowledge. We must have a regular time for our Bible reading, and the time must be adequate to the great purpose. We would not undertake to master any other volume in the fragments of time we often consider sufficient for the greatest of all books. Not only a regular

time, but a regular place is necessary, or at least best, that customary surroundings may put us immediately into the Bible frame of mind. And we need, of course, a proper set of printed helps to interpret to us this Book that comes down to us from ancient times and from other lands and races. Without such helps we should not think of mastering any book but this supreme Book.

Above all, for Bible saturation we need the aid of the Holy Spirit, who has promised to take all these things and show them to us. Wisest method and most copious commentaries fail without the unseen Teacher. We need Him to quicken our minds, to enforce our memories, and to touch our consciences. Even geology and psychology become new and living sciences to us if we have inspiring living teachers; how much more do we need this greatest of all teachers for the greatest of all studies!

Persistency also is required for Bible saturation. Fill a sponge with water to its utmost and then leave it in the air; it will not be long before the sponge is dry and hard. The cares of this world, the world's pleasures and sorrows and toil, will soon evaporate our Bible knowledge, our Bible wisdom, if it is not continually renewed. Over and over the mind must go to the fountain. The supply of the water of life which is adequate for to-day will not answer for the morrow. "Day by day the manna fell." Day by day come the showers of Bible blessing.

Would you test your Bible saturation? Then

look to your life. The experience of all Bible-saturated men is that their lives are rendered wonderfully easy and pleasant by the Bible. Is that so with you? Do your worries melt away from you in the glow of the Bible promises? Are your perplexities borne blithely away by the flood of Bible thoughts and experience? Is your loneliness dissipated by the memory of the Bible men and women who are waiting for you over yonder and who even now, perhaps, are watching your struggles in the world where they have struggled so heroically? Is the Bible truly the man of your counsel, the lamp of your feet, the sword of your spirit, all the other good things that it has proved itself to be in the lives of millions of Bible-lovers? This is the test of the fullness of your Bible gains.

Let us never be satisfied with less than the best the Bible can bring to us. Halfway is a poor way in any enterprise, and the greater the enterprise the more miserable is any paltering with it. I would not say, "Bible saturation or no Bible at all," but I would say, "Become saturated with the Bible!" Crowd your memory with the blessed truths, with the very words of Holy Writ. Rehearse them in the night watches and as you walk to your tasks. Begin and end the day with them. Make each day, distinctively and in progressive series, a Bible day. Then will you become a man, a woman, of the Book, and the Book will become you, entering into your life, and incorporating itself with your destiny.

XV

THE BLESSEDNESS OF BOOKS

I HAVE in my attic eighteen thousand friends. Among those friends are the very wisest men and women the world has known, the most sympathetic, the wittiest, the most delightful, the noblest. Not one of these eighteen thousand friends has ever forced himself upon me. They are all modest and retiring; they come at my call, go when I dismiss them, and calmly bide my further pleasure. When I go away, I am constantly happy in the thought that these eighteen thousand friends are waiting my return. They have never failed me or disappointed me. I go to them for information, and they freely give it; for advice, and it is mine—advice of the best and without nagging. I seek comfort in sorrow, a new hold on life, a new insight into eternity, and all this is bestowed upon me.

Of course these eighteen thousand friends are so many books; what else could they be? I am blessed with many friends in the flesh, and they can do for me what my library cannot do; but there are many times when my friends on the shelf can help me more than my friends that move and talk.

I value these books so highly that I am ashamed

when I think what trifles I paid for them. They were mostly second-hand, though they occupy this first-hand place in my affections. I picked them up for a quarter each, a dime, or a nickel. I rescued them from dusty sidewalk stalls or the dark corners of cellar bookstores. I greeted each as a new-found brother, and welcomed him into my attic family. Henceforth he was a friend for life.

Visitors wandering through the maze of my pine shelves in the closely packed attic sometimes ask me whether I have read all these books. Yes, with the heart, though of course not all of them with the head. I know them all intimately by the insight of affection, which is so much better than the cold appraisal of the eyes. It has been love at first sight in every case, and this has accomplished more than decades of formal meeting. I know the character of every book, I might almost say its personality. I am glad that I shall never read them all, for thus I am assured of an exhaustless joy and benefit.

I have no pride of possession in these books. I would that all the world had as many friends, and I am never more happy than when I can introduce these book comrades to my friends of flesh and blood. It is a cordial brotherhood into which one is admitted by the love of books. A library is a true democracy.

But though I gladly admit all others to this blessedness of books, those eighteen thousand volumes in my attic make me feel as rich as Rockefeller or Car-

negie. Richer; for their libraries, though worth immensely more than mine in dollars and cents, did not come to them in the intimate way in which mine came to me, by the loving search of many years, by a hundred glad economies, by scores of miles of walking annually, by a pursuit of painstaking enthusiasm.

As I sit in the midst of my books it is a wealthy joy to realize that I am at least a potential multimillionaire of thoughts. I am sitting in a treasure house the like of which Crœsus did not own. Here by the bushel are jewels of wisdom, gems of brilliant imagination. Here are stores of golden experience that would bankrupt the riches of India if one should try to buy them. So far as I make them really my own, I am possessed of the eternal treasures that will outlast this world and all worlds.

There's the rub, in all that has to do with books —making them really our own. It is easy to pay ten cents for an old book or a dollar and a half for a new book, but when the money leaves your purse the book does not enter your head. Write your name on its flyleaf, record it in your book catalogue, place it on your shelf, and still it is not yours. Read it, read every word of it, and it may be as far as ever from being really yours. Before you can own the book, in some way or other the spirit of the book must become your spirit, the book—its essential facts, its living purpose—must get embodied in your memory and your purpose, must become *you*.

Whenever this happens, you understand anew the blessedness of books. You have been made more than yourself. You have added a cubit to your mental and spiritual stature. You have enlarged your life by another life, a life of significance, of beauty and power. It is this that exhilarates you, that fills you with strange joy, in all your authentic dealings with books.

Thus it will be seen that no slothful man can read a book. The process is strenuous, calling for the most alert attention, the most eager appropriation. For every thousand that go through the motions of reading, there is scarcely one that actually reads. If readers were as many as books or even as libraries, this old world would be leagues nearer its goal.

Education in the art of reading is therefore the task of a lifetime. The most expert readers are constantly growing more efficient, and the crudest beginner may have good hope. Every increase in mental power, in spiritual apprehension, makes one a better reader; and improved reading in turn brings enlarged mental and spiritual power. It is an endless chain of profitable reactions. Whoever has in his heart the beginnings of book blessedness has entered upon a path that reaches through eternity; for if there are no books in heaven there is certainly something of the same kind, only far better.

XVI

MARKED UP

"MARKED Down" is an attractive sign often seen in our shops, but who has ever seen the sign, "Marked Up"? In our human merchandizing we begin with a price as high as we dare to affix, and gradually mark it down till the article is sold.

Christ deals with human lives in just the opposite way. So far as they are influenced by Him, they are marked up, advanced in value. All the contact men have with Him makes them worth more.

Paul has a very tender and profound phrase in his first letter to Corinth: "the brother for whose sake Christ died." He may be a very weak brother, but Christ died for him just the same, and that gives him the strongest claim upon us. For his sake, we may well put ourselves out, even abridge our just liberties, take the greatest pains to remove stumblingblocks from his way; he is "the brother for whose sake Christ died." What a tragic, shameful sin if any act of a Christian should counteract the divine sacrifice!

Indeed, if we love Christ, no man, however wicked or repulsive, can be common or unclean in our eyes. Christ's death for him marks him up.

He was bought with a great price and is still to be held at that price.

Whatever Christ died for, His followers can certainly live for. He died for the world; shame to us if we do not live for the world. He died for the lowest, least hopeful sinner; shame to us if we count that sinner as beneath our notice, beyond our faith and hope. He rated man so highly that He gladly left heaven for him, gladly ascended Golgotha for him; shame to us if we are unwilling, for the sake of any man, to leave our easy chair or climb the hillock of a little effort.

Our Lord touched common life in many ways, and never left it common. How enormously was the value of the lily marked up when He bade us consider it. What importance attaches to sparrows since He said that not one of them falls to the ground without our Father's notice. The sweeping of a floor, the breaking of a loaf of bread, the sowing of seed, the growth of a grapevine, have taken on transcendent significance from His mention of them. He has enriched beyond measure all our daily happenings; association with Him has marked them all up.

Life itself, our mere existence, is transformed by Christ entering it. He stands at the door of our life and knocks, He is so eager to enter in. He would like to sup with us; what a banquet then is ours! We may think that we are living humdrum, futile lives; He evidently does not think so. What-

ever in our faithlessness we may imagine, He sees in them boundless possibilities. His interest in our lives exalts them in our own tired eyes.

We know that there is nothing fictitious about this. Speculators often work promotion schemes, inflate values, make what is worthless appear most desirable, and so cheat the public and fatten their own purses. But the increase of values which Christ brings about is real, because it is based on actualities. He sees the gold mine where men see only quartz. He sees the king in the peasant, the sage in the ignoramus. The possibilities which He points out are not mirages. The New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven rests upon the most substantial of foundations. Christ never pretends.

And so the Christian has a right to believe in himself, since the all-seeing Christ believes in him. It would be false modesty to distrust his own possibilities; such distrust would amount to a criticism of Christ. In proud humility the Christian holds his head high, for Christ has lifted it up. It is a great thing to have a friend who believes in one; how much greater when that friend is the Son of God!

We may not at once come into a full appreciation of what Christ has done for the values of men and of all things. Sometimes this understanding flashes upon the believer with glorious suddenness. Sometimes instantly the world takes on a new and supernal meaning. All existence is glorified for us. Windows are opened into the heavenly life.

But most of us come to see these glories only slowly, as we creep into fuller communion with Christ, as we enter more and more deeply into the secrets of the Christian life. It is a lovely unfolding. Day by day earth becomes fairer. Day by day the folks around us become dearer. Day by day the present becomes brighter and the future glows with a happier hope. Christ's joy is getting into us and our joy is getting filled full.

It is easy, even for one who has been blessed by many of the Christian experiences, to fail of this enriching and ennobling of life. It is easy to go on to the very gates of death with all values marked down, ourselves, our friends, mankind, the world, and human destiny. It is easy to see through a glass, darkly. Our souls have no trouble in manufacturing clouds. The sun is bright, but our eyes are very small, and small things will put them in the shadow.

And it is not easy to live the appreciating life, the marking-up life, the life of ever-increasing valuation. In fact, so prone are we to take the downward course, to look downward, to think downward, that only He who came from above can give us the upward bent, the lifting impulse. But He can do it and is eager to do it. This is the more abundant life He wishes us to enter. He will lead us into it as fast as we will let Him.

Onward, then, with Christ! As you begin each day, begin it with the confident expectation of novel

and delightful experiences. You are not to end the day as you began it. The evening is to find you stronger than the morning, fairer, sweeter, wiser, nobler. The day is to make you happier than you have yet dreamed of being. It is to acquaint you with new depths of friendship. It is to unfold fresh meanings in the world and open up glorious vistas of the world's future. This marvelous day is to lead to one still more wonderful, and that to a day yet greater, and so on through all the expanding reaches of eternity; for there is no end to God's power and love.

XVII

OUR WILLS AND GOD'S WAYS

"WHERE there's a will there's a way" is a maxim of good intentions but false pretensions. It puts man's will in the place of God's will, and estimates it as practically omnipotent. Only of the Infinite Will can it be said truly that there is always a way open to it.

This maxim has deceived many thousands, luring them on to vain endeavours and false hopes. It has led them to persist in enterprises quite impossible for their powers. It has resulted in embittered, defeated lives. "Others succeeded," say these victims of mistaken philosophy, "and I can do what they did, if I have the will power. I'll find a way or make one."

Now every one should recognize the immense value of the human will. No life is well lived without purpose. This is the power that holds us to our tasks, overcomes obstacles that often seem insurmountable, and carries us in triumph to our goal. Where there is a strong, steady, intelligent, conscientious will, there always is a way. Without it there never is a way, no matter how great the genius may be that seeks it.

But this very fact that the will of man is so mighty renders doubly dangerous such a saying as "Where there's a will there's a way." If the will is not intelligent and conscientious, if it is not in harmony with God's will and therefore with reason and with providence, there is no way for it, and there should not be.

So the very first condition for success in life is to make God's will our guide. He alone is the Way. When we have His will, we have His way. When we have His way, we for the first time have our own way—a way that we shall be eternally glad to have made our own.

And then, having merged our wills in God's, how powerful, how magnificent our wills immediately become! Man's most glorious instrument is a consecrated will. Before it all obstacles fall—that ought to fall; with it all buildings rise—that ought to rise. Our vaunted will power then becomes power indeed.

With this understanding of the matter, what is better worth cultivating than this same will power? Men may most significantly be divided into those who have it and those who lack it. To gain it is worth all perseverance and painstaking, because in it is the secret of all accomplishment. Having gained it as our servant, it will henceforth defeat our foes and do our work.

How are we to go to work to gain this wonderful will power? We cannot will ourselves into it, for

we should need the will power itself to do that. But we can work and pray ourselves into it. We can recognize the need, and then our intelligent, God-aided effort will do the rest.

Conscience is an infallible guide to will power. If we follow its lead implicitly, going where it urges, doing what it bids, we shall meet the most educative and strengthening experiences. The muscles of our souls will grow apace, and our spiritual stamina will become adamantine. No one that neglects conscience can be anything but a moral weakling, and no one that obeys conscience can fail to grow gigantic.

Will power, we need to remind ourselves, is not willfulness. Willfulness is will weakness and not will power; it is not strength but catalepsy, which often counterfeits strength. "A wilfu' man maun hae his way"—but willfulness never has its way. Willfulness is not full of will, but empty of it. Willfulness is the mirage of will-fullness.

"When I am weak, then am I strong," said Paul, the man of iron will, the man of successful ways. He put his will into subjection to the law of Christ, and thereby won his crown of authority. He bent in loving service over the humblest, and so he came to stand before kings. If he had been a willful man, he would never have impressed as he did his will on the world.

The will that counts for character is an unselfish will, but it is a will. It fixes on what is best worth

doing, and it holds to that with a tenacious purpose. Every day is made a new drill in will power. Every night finds this knight of the will with a little stronger determination than the night before.

It is a superb sensation, this of knowing ourselves to be growing more masterful. If you could get such a grasp of the forces of nature that you could fly, how you would exult in the development of speed, in the conquest of the air! Or if you could conquer the chemical and physical forces of the world so that you could transmute metals and grasp the enormous power resident in every atom, how you would rejoice in your expanding experiments, in your daily marvels of new accomplishment! An even greater delight attends the development of one's spiritual powers, the annexation of new domains in the world of thought and of character. It is a great thing to be the Columbus of one's own soul.

Such an exhilaration is within the reach of all. Few can reach the earth's poles, but all can reach the poles of character, the climaxes of goodness and of strength. Few can be multimillionaires of gold, but all may be multimillionaires of grace.

If you have a weak will, your first task, your daily, anxious toil, should be to strengthen it. Accept no excuse, such as you will so readily offer to yourself. Allow yourself no indulgences. Aim at ideal will power, for nothing else ever finds God's ways. Be your own strictest taskmaster. Keep

insistent account of your progress or your failures. Count the day lost, though you make that day a thousand dollars, in which you have not made some little gain in will power. Thus only will you pierce to the center of the citadel, and find shining there the jewel of a divine success.

XVIII

THE ART OF EATING TOGETHER

I BELONG to the Knockers' Club. This honourable company is not an organization. It has no officers, though sometimes an officer of the law would be considered a needed member. It has no constitution, except the human constitution. Its membership consists of any person in our office who can be persuaded to "go out and have some grub," and any visitor who can be induced to "come along." Its meeting place is any convenient restaurant, the cheaper the better. Its meetings are every once in a while. Such is the "Knockers' Club" to which I am glad to belong.

Its name is genuinely descriptive, which is more than can be said of all club names. Its members are all expert "knockers." What "digs" they can give! What "slams!" No member is safe from a hit. And if any one enters the "Knockers' Club" with a thin skin, his cuticle gets toughened before he has attended many meetings.

Good-natured? It is more than that, it is hilarious. The harder the knocks, the more we enjoy it. We get into such a gale of merriment that the neighbouring eaters gaze at us in wonder, and in envy.

We go away from every sitting with our brains tingling and our hearts glowing. The knocking has been all in good fellowship, as bear cubs roll over one another and cuff one another for pure joy of living. If we should eat together without "knocking," we should count the meal an unprofitable failure.

Now something analogous to this procedure of the "Knockers' Club" must enter every worth-while eating together. Not that all would enjoy this verbal horseplay; some would call it rough; some would be frightened by it. But the mutual understanding which is back of it, the hearty good fellowship, the give and take of mind and soul, these are always a part of the art of eating together.

What a travesty on that fine art is the average meal of which two or more human beings partake! They sit at the same wooden table, but they do not gather at any common table of the spirit. They talk, but they do not converse, for that good word implies that their minds are "turned together." They are polite to one another, but not pleased with one another. They have fed their bodies, but they have not at the same time fed their souls.

The communion feast in our churches should be to modern Christians what it really was to the first Christians, a model for every common daily meal. At the church communion we Christians commune with our Lord, but we also commune with one another. The feast is designed to cement the fellow-

ship of the saints as well as their spiritual union with their Saviour. Thus it will be with every meal when Christians truly enter into the spirit of the communion service.

We of the Occident need to adopt more of the oriental view of the significance of eating together. To men of the East the partaking of a meal cements friendship. The circle of a table is supposed to surround henceforth the lives it has once bound together. Food coming from the same dish and entering different bodies is supposed to join those bodies in a mystical union. If enemies have eaten together they are from that time fast friends. Our communion service lifts that oriental custom to the loftiest plane.

The art of eating together, then, is the art of living for the highest and the best. It is the art of meeting others upon the ground of loving sympathy and brotherly helpfulness. It is the art of forgetting differences and emphasizing agreements. It is the art of unselfishness.

People eat together more often in the home than anywhere else, so the art of eating together is primarily a home art. Unless we practise it in the home we are not likely to practise it in the restaurant, or in the hotel, or anywhere else.

But the art is peculiarly difficult in the home, because we so easily exhaust one another there, or think we do. It is not so easy to keep up an interest in one another. We may love one another, but

we do not enjoy one another! This very contradictory sentence expresses the near-tragedy of countless homes.

Now since the art of eating together implies enjoying one another, it comes very close to the secret of a happy home. We shall enjoy one another if we really enter sympathetically into one another's life. Every life is packed full of thrilling interest as soon as we understand it. God, who understands us most thoroughly, is most interested in us; that is the reason why Christ came to this earth. As we share God's loving insight into humanity, we shall come to share His absorption in humanity.

Cold breakfast tables, dumb dinner tables, silent supper tables, are therefore fundamentally unchristian tables. Of course we all realize that table quarrels are unchristian, but so also is table glumness. By the "grace" which we say at the beginning of the meal we summon, if we mean it, the gracious presence of the Master. When He comes, His joy is in us and our joy is fulfilled, filled full. He makes us acquainted with one another, interested in one another, happy with one another. His presence incarnates the art of eating with one another, and it is all summed up in James Freeman Clarke's beautiful interpretation of the Cana miracle:

> Dear Friend! whose presence in the house,
> Whose gracious word benign,
> Could once, at Cana's wedding feast,
> Turn water into wine;

Come, visit us! and when dull work
  Grows weary, line on line,
Revive our souls, and let us see
  Life's water turned to wine.

Gay mirth shall deepen into joy,
  Earth's hopes grow half divine,
When Jesus visits us, to make
  Life's water glow as wine.

The social talk, the evening fire,
  The homely household shrine,
Grow bright with angel visits, when
  The Lord pours out the wine.

For when self-seeking turns to love,
  Not knowing mine nor thine,
The miracle again is wrought,
  And water turned to wine.

XIX

ALL SORTS

"IT takes all sorts of people to make a world." So we say with a shrug when we meet some one who is not of our sort. The other person is probably saying the same thing of us.

It sounds rather liberal to say, "It takes all sorts of people to make a world." It is a recognition that the other sorts of folks may have a use, may fill niches of their own, may be rather good sorts of people after all. We are proud of our broad-mindedness. Some that we know would not own the necessity for these other kinds of people to make a world; would sweep them, metaphorically, off the face of the earth. We are more tolerant.

One can imagine the minerals talking. Says the Diamond to the Ruby, "I suppose we must acknowledge the usefulness of Silica and Iron over yonder; you know it takes all sorts of material to make a world." And the two gems glitter and flash in their exclusive corner. But here are the Silica and the Iron, the vast, solid substance of this great globe; we can fancy their looking askance at the proud gems and saying scornfully: "Gewgaws! Silly bits of stone! But I suppose it takes all sorts of material to make a world."

It is indeed fortunate for us that the Creator was not so supercilious in making the world. He was just as much interested in the wonderful pyramidal quartz crystal as in the diamond. He cared just as much to perfect the potato as the rose. He rejoices in a raindrop as in the Falls of Niagara. Whatever He has had to do with has been for the time as the only thing in the world, as if all the world were of that sort. He has no favourites in His creation.

Nor has He any favourites among men. Of course, John is nearer to Him than Judas; but that is the fault of Judas, not the merit of John. Of course, as one star differs from another star in glory, Paul shines in the heavenly firmament more resplendently than Tertius; but if Tertius, as is very likely, loves God as intensely as Paul, and strives as hard to please God, God loves Tertius as much as Paul, and blesses him as much. The law of gravitation is universal; the same rule holds good for a feather as for a planet, for Mercury as for Jupiter. So is the law of divine love.

It is fortunate for us, also, that not only does God care equally for all sorts, but that He has made His world of many sorts. What chemical element, even the most obscure, would we wish omitted? We are constantly finding new and important uses for what we had hardly known before, such as radium and helium. Where would be our civilization if all the world were one vast diamond? or, for that mat-

ter, if all the world were iron? We could not spare the oak tree, but neither could we spare the bluebird. We should miss the common grass even more than the marvelous orchids.

Equally fortunate is it that God likes a diversity of men. What if the Creator had made us all bookworms, and the world one vast library? Would not a farmer then be almost worshiped as a god? We have manifold needs, and we enjoy satisfying each one of those needs. How fortunate that God has made men who enjoy providing for the satisfaction of each one of our needs! How fortunate also that men exist whose needs call for the especial thing that we like to make or to do!

Who has not had the happy experience of "being agreeably surprised" in some person? We have thought him cross-grained, and he turns out to be tender-hearted. We have thought him crude, and we discover that he is an ardent student of Browning. We had thought him cold, and we find that he cannot speak of his dead child without weeping. We had thought him an infidel, and we learn that he knows by heart the Gospel of John and reverences its every word.

We call such an experience "getting under his shell." We thus lay the blame on that mythical "shell," and not on our own purblind eyes, our own dull sympathies. The loveliness, the tenderness, the wisdom, the faith, stand out clearly to us, now that our eyes are opened. They were there plainly all

the while, had we only looked for them, expected them.

No one is likely to see in any sort of man what he is not looking for. To shut out any sort of man from the possibility of exhibiting this or that noble and beautiful quality is sure to mean a great loss for us. It is as if the chemists had refused to admit coal tar to their consideration as a source of colors, and so had lost to mankind its loveliest dyes.

"All sorts to make a world!" Say it not in condescension, but in gratitude and pride; gratitude to the Maker, and pride in your fellow men of all sorts. Become a Columbus of human nature, and go forth every day expecting to find in the most unlikely place an unsuspected new world of beauty, heroism, sagacity, and goodness. You will not be disappointed.

This is not to deny the existence of evil, or to shut our eyes to it. There are bad sorts in the world as well as good sorts. But there is good in the bad sorts, just as there is evil in the good sorts. The Son of God came to earth because of the good in the bad sorts as well as because of the evil in the good sorts. He found a denying Peter. He found a confessing Zacchæus. And in like manner He sends us forth "into all the world," to make disciples of all the sorts of men that make the world.

XX

CHOICE SEATS

IT is a dark day, and the lights of the steam cars are turned on. As you go through the train looking for a good seat where you can read your newspaper you are sure to find the seats directly under the lights filled first. It makes no difference whether the passenger wants to read or not; he may be sound asleep; he has picked out the choice seat under the light. Never mind whether others that want to read must take the darker seats; "first come, first served," you know. Hasn't he a right to the best seat, as he came first, even if he makes no use at all of that which renders it desirable?

Walk along the streets and observe the street corners. You will not go far without discovering a corner where the crowds are thrown into confusion by two persons who have chosen the street corner for a conversation. They have not thought to step a little aside against the building. They pay no attention to the scores of pedestrians who must turn out of their course for them, and bump into one another, and ruffle their tempers. Did they not meet each other on that street corner? Have they

not the same right to that street as any one else? Do they not pay taxes? So there they stand, conversing serenely, entirely oblivious to everything but their own selfish whims.

"Move up! *Move up! Please* move up!" shouts the street-car conductor. Around the doors is a choked, swaying mass of uncomfortable humanity. In the center of the car, a big vacant place. The people at the inner edges of the crowd are comfortable, because they front this vacant space. Why should they budge to accommodate the crowds near the doors? Have they not a right to stand where they please in the car? Why should they put themselves in the middle of the car and so have harder work to reach the doors when they reach their destination? Why, indeed?

Thoughtfulness should be illustrated in a church, if anywhere; but look over the next congregation you see, and notice how few go to the end of their pews, leaving the seats next the aisle for the late comers. Next to the aisle is the choice seat. One has the pew arm to rest on. One has a clearer view of the preacher. One can get into the aisle and out of the church more quickly when the benediction is pronounced. Does not the occupant of that pew pay for the privilege? Why should he not occupy the choice end of it? Is he not doing them a sufficient favor by allowing them to enter the pew at all?

Thus through all social relationships the principle

of the choice seats may be followed. Sometimes the seat is only choice for others and not for the occupant, and sometimes the occupant himself is benefited by the choiceness, or persuades himself that he is. It makes little or no difference. Everywhere the kindly observer of human nature is saddened, as Christ was, by the scramble for what are considered to be the best seats, and the holding of them against all comers. Everywhere one sees jockeying for advantageous positions in the race of life. Everywhere one sees the contest of selfishness and pride. Everywhere is illustrated the old fable of the dog in the manger, who cannot himself eat, but will not permit the horse to eat.

Now it is in these common social relations that Christian unselfishness is most helpfully shown, just because they are common. Slight in each case, the aggregate is enormous, represents almost the whole of life. We do not often have an opportunity to save a drowning boy, but every day we have dozens of chances to make it pleasanter for others on the street, in the cars, in the restaurant, in our office, or in our home. If we save our self-sacrifice for the great occasions, we shall probably never have a chance to illustrate the crowning grace of Christianity, and we shall miss many thousands of chances which would sum up a far more splendid total.

It will help us to be Christians in the little things of life if we remember where Christ is, and always

range ourselves by His side. He is not in the front ranks jostling for place. He is not among the hustlers for prominence. He is not looking out for His own ease and wealth. He is in the rear of the crowds. He is in the poorest seat. He is exalted, but on a cross, not on a throne.

It will help us also if we form the habit of looking beyond the present. We have Christ's word for it that the occupant of the lowest seat will be invited to the highest seat, while the man who has pushed himself into the best seat will be degraded to the worst. Always sit under the light here, whether you use it or not, and hereafter you will have the darkness. Block up the street corners here, and you will hardly have the chance to repeat your selfishness on the streets of gold. Take the end seats here and hold them against all comers, and you will with difficulty find any seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. For nothing so decisively as selfishness shuts a soul out of heaven.

Christ spoke in parables in order that we also may interpret Christianity in terms of our daily lives. If He were living to-day, He would teach religion in the language and atmosphere of the telephone, the dry-goods counter, the ticket office, the subway, and the elevated. It is not that these matters may illustrate religion, but that they may embody religion. Unless our love of God and man shows itself in the seats we select or surrender, we have no love of God and man to show itself at all.

XXI

ALL THINGS NEW

ONE of the most delightful promises in the Bible comes near the close. It is the promise in Revelation, which John heard from the majestic Occupant of the throne: "Behold, I make all things new."

Some men like old things because they are old, but all men like new things because they are new. What housewife does not long for a new house, everything fresh and unused from cellar to garret, new dishes, new rugs, new furniture, new table linen, new clothes? What man does not enjoy moving into a new office, with new chairs, a new table, and a big, shining, new desk? What teacher does not enjoy a new textbook, with clearer type, clearer explanations, a more fascinating style? What reader does not delight in cutting the pages of a bright new book? Yes, and what man or woman of all of us but would shout for joy at the chance to throw away the old life, with all its wearying failures and tiresome worries and enchaining sins, and start out afresh in a brand-new life, all clean and pure and strong?

Now all this is only a feeble hint of what is meant

by that glorious promise of the Father, "Behold, I make all things new."

"All things"—why, wake up! what does that mean but—*all* things? A new house to live in? Of course; is not a home a part of "all things"? New clothes to wear? To be sure. New books to read? New songs to hear? New sights to see? New experiences to enjoy? New emotions? New desires? New habits? A new, clean soul? A new, strong, happy life? Have not all of these a right among the "all things"? Certainly. Then they are all to be made new.

Ah, but when? Is it only in some dim, far-off world, some vague hereafter, some distant heaven? We are hungry for freshness now. We are tired of worn-out, shabby things and of frayed, soiled souls. If God will make all things new for us, we should so like to enjoy the newness at once.

And we may. This is God's new year's message for us. He does not wait till New Year's Day to give it to us, and after New Year's Day He does not cease giving it to us. Every day may be a New Year's Day, and every day may hear the Father's promise, "Behold this day I make all things new."

That is because the condition of the newness which God promises is not dying, is not entering heaven, is not at all a condition of time or a condition of place. The condition is simply that we receive Jesus Christ into our hearts, receiving with

Him newness of life. When we have entered into the Christ life, then, as Paul wrote, "the first things are passed away"—all of them; "behold, they are become new"—every one of them. We are new creatures in a new world.

The reason why we are not constantly exulting in newness, in freshness, in delightful novelties, in the crisp charm of unworn experiences and possessions, is just because we do not really believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. For "gospel" means, literally, "good *news*." Once, perhaps, it was news to us, startlingly novel, winsomely fresh and vital. But the news has grown stale, has become *olds*. The New Testament has lost its newness; has grown to be a second Old Testament. We have heard these things so much, read them so often, that familiarity has worn off their edge, tamed their tang. The good news is just as new as ever, but our zest is not new, our attention and appreciation are worn out.

What is that saying of Paul's? "Though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." Of far too many of us the saying might truthfully be changed: "While our outward man is decaying, our inward man is decaying with it." Otherwise, since the inward man is the real man, the world would be renewed for us day by day. Every new day would mean a new year and a new world.

Have you read Margaret Prescott Montague's wonderful little book, "Twenty Minutes of Real-

ity"? She was recovering from a sickness, sitting up in a hospital chair, and all of a sudden she saw the world with new eyes. All her senses were marvelously intensified. She became conscious, keenly and amazingly conscious, of the beauty and glory around her. She had never imagined such sunshine, such colours. The sight of a girl's hair thrilled her as she had never been thrilled before. The voices around her were like those of a chorus of angels. Every motion took on an unguessed grace. For twenty minutes she sat there, wrapped in the bliss of it, and then saw the real world gradually fade away into the common, everyday world she had always known. She had enjoyed twenty minutes of reality. Since then she has had a few briefer glimpses of the real world, and after her account of the experience was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* she received many letters from others who also had enjoyed these visions of the real world.

Might not this glory, this freshness, this vividness, be ours all the time if only we lived real lives? If our hearts were pure, if our ideals were noble, if our wills were strong, if we dwelt in Christ and He in us, might not those rare moments of reality become our constant and permanent experience?

"I wish you a happy new year," we cry to one another. This is the happy new year, this life hid with Christ in God. Having that life, we "serve in newness of the spirit." Having that life, we see

"a new heaven and a new earth." Having that life, every minute, every experience, and every possession comes to us new and wonderful, shining with all the freshness of creation, and fair with all the glory of immortal youth.

XXII

PRECIOUS TACT

TACT is one of the most precious of qualities because it is so rare. If any one doubts this, let him count up the persons of his acquaintance whom he could fairly call men and women of tact. One of the commonest of discounts is, "He is an excellent fellow, but he lacks tact." So little do we realize the enormous importance of tact that we do not often perceive what a serious detraction such a statement is.

Tact is precious as precious stones are, not only because of their rarity but because of their beauty. Tact is one of the loveliest of human qualities. Our eyes light up when we see a person whom we know to be tactful, quite as they rejoice to behold a wonderful opal, softly glowing red and green and blue. If any characteristic of a man has more value than tact, it is closely associated with it and based upon it.

And tact is precious also because of what it can buy for its owner. Few prizes of earth but are purchased by it, and the more we use it the more we have of it. Tact is a magic coin; the spending

of one leaves us with two. Tact is an open sesame to all doors. Tact is a fairy carpet transporting us to all lands. Tact is Aladdin's lamp laying all treasures at our feet.

It is not easy to define this precious thing, for it has as many forms and colours as a sunrise. Tact is human sympathy in action. Tact is putting yourself in another's place. Tact is imagination vitalized by love. Tact is the politeness of the heart. Tact is the working out of the Golden Rule.

Tact means touch. Some men have naturally, or acquire laboriously, a delicate touch. The typist never looks at the keys of her instrument, but hour after hour her fingers fly over them, putting into permanent form the thoughts of her employer. She does her wonderwork by a mechanical tact, "the touch system" of typewriting.

Watch a barber shaving. He uses the sharpest of tools upon a substance most easily cut, yet he glides over the complicated curves of the face without a mishap because his "touch" has been marvelously perfected.

See that blind man reading. Back and forth over the lines of raised letters his fingers move smoothly and swiftly, and pass the author's meaning to his brain as readily and surely as could his eyes before they were ruined. He has cultivated the sense of touch till it almost takes the place of the sense of

sight, and does for him what tact does for any man that has it—interprets the world to him.

It is tact that enables the violinist and pianist to draw marvelous tones from their instruments, and it is tact that makes music in human lives. It is tact that guides the hand of the artist, and it is tact that paints many a picture of brotherhood and helpfulness. It is tact that designs and erects the world's great buildings, and it is tact that builds the structure of society. Whatever the versatile sense of touch accomplishes in the mechanical and fine arts, that, glorified and sanctified, tact accomplishes for the lives and souls of men.

Nor is the way in which spiritual tact is obtained very different from the manner in which material touch is developed.

First must come an understanding of tools and substances. The carpenter must know his plane and his wood, he must be familiar with each and the action of each, or he cannot use the one for the smoothening and fashioning of the other. So also tact requires an understanding of that strange thing, human nature, and of the tools with which we mould it, chiefly the puissant tool of speech.

Next must come persistent and long-continued practice. The carpenter spoils many a piece of wood before he is able to plane a single board satisfactorily, and we must expect to make many a blunder before we learn how to handle men tactfully; but patience and perseverance will prevail.

The final element of tact is liking, rising into love. Without love for his work no artisan or artist can fully develop the master's touch. Without love no one can become a tactful master of men. Watch a musician's tender handling of piano or violin. See with what reverence a scholar opens a book, or a naturalist goes to the heart of a flower, or a machinist tends his engine. Things become persons through the alchemy of love; and persons, through the same alchemy, become transfigured, almost divine. Love is at the bottom of every miracle of insight or achievement.

Three gateways, therefore, one after the other, lead to the beautiful palace of tact. Their names are Thought, Patience, and Love. We must spend time with other men, and delve into their lives till we are at home there. We must learn to wait, we must repeat our approaches, we must be content with slow progress, and never give up.

These two things we can do, but how can we enter the third gate, the gate of love? We cannot command love, or manufacture it. If love is an essential of tact, is not tact a matter of mere chance?

Not at all; but here, as in all fundamental affairs, we learn our need of God. For God is love. God, therefore, is the Fountain of tact. If we would love, we must dwell in God and God in us. The final certainty of tact is the Spirit of God in our hearts. He, when He comes, will show us all

things. He will show us the lovable side of all men, and the way to all men's hearts. He who made the sense of touch will develop our tact. He who made men will teach us how to deal with men. As we are led by Him we shall lovingly and effectively lead others, and we shall find the most precious thing in all the world.

XXIII

ABILITY TO WORK WITH OTHERS

THERE are few solitary occupations. Even the poet must get his poems published. Even the inventor must employ workmen to carry out his ideas. The lives of most toilers are inextricably intertwined with the lives of many other labourers. "It is not good for man to be alone"; yes, and it is not possible very long.

Our success in our work depends to a great extent on our ability to work with others. The clerk in a store may be very accurate, very prompt, very intelligent, but if he is not also pleasing to the customers he will soon be dismissed. The failure of some famous statesmen has been caused by their inability to co-operate or obtain co-operation. The failure of many a business enterprise has been, at bottom, the failure of all hands to pull together. Life is like a football game: teamwork is more important than almost any other factor if the victory is to be won.

I was once in the class of a college teacher who was a brilliant scholar and a most efficient instructor, save for the fact that his pupils, in general, hated him. His manner, his words, his entire per-

sonality, inspired antagonism. In his classes the mildest students became rebels and the bolder students became absolutely unmanageable. Every trick that was ever played on a college teacher, I think, was played on him. He was driven to retirement in the prime of life, and died in poverty and disappointment.

The other day I was talking with a stenographer about her employer. He is a man of mediocre powers, able to pay only meager salaries; but he obtains the best of service from the best of workers, all of whom are enthusiastically loyal to him. "He is so jolly!" exclaimed the stenographer in explanation.

The most successful military leaders have won their battles not so much because of their genius in planning campaigns, devising shrewd thrusts, massing their forces at the weakest points of their foes, as through their almost uncanny ability to arouse the personal devotion of their soldiers. As such a commander rides along the line hats fly in the air, hearts grow light, and the fire of irresistible valour kindles in every eye. A surly, tactless, unpopular general is defeated before he advances his troops a foot.

I have just used a great word. Tact is responsible for a large part of all that gets done in this world. Tact means touch, contact, the vitalizing impression of life upon life. Without tact in machinery there would be no motion, no power. Cog must meet cog, band must bear on shaft, steam

must press on piston, and thus the work of the world is done. The most powerful dynamo ever made, whirling all by itself in an isolated house, would be as weak and feeble as an infant. Take a wire from it and touch it to a wire leading outside, and lights burst forth in a thousand homes. It is exactly by such contacts that the social machinery of the world is run.

Men are in the habit of thinking that this tact is inborn in a man, which it often is; and is not to be obtained otherwise, which is a great mistake. Inborn tact may be increased and tactlessness may be changed into tact. This change is one of the fruits of Christianity.

That is because Christianity means sympathy and love. Tact involves putting yourself in the other person's place. When you do that you are brought together. Try to see through his eyes, to feel his experiences. Do not try to impose yourself upon him; try rather to impose himself upon you. In other words, get out of a self-centered life and live unselfishly. That is the essence of Christianity.

Who was the most tactful person that ever lived? Of all persons that the world has known, whose influence is the greatest? The universal answer is, the influence of Jesus Christ. It is because He makes the most perfect contact with the largest number of souls. Lifted up on the cross, He draws all men to Himself. He is the Vine and

we are the branches; He in us and we in Him. There is no closer contact than that.

As we get Christ's Spirit in us, we in turn draw close to others, influence them profoundly and blessedly, work with them happily and lead them to work happily with us. Every attempt at co-operation without Christ ends soon or late—usually soon—in utter failure. Every attempt at co-operation which He leads, in business, in society, in the realms of the spirit, is from the start an assured success. Work with Christ, and you and all men will work successfully together.

XXIV

OPEN GATES

THE ancient town of Plymouth, Massachusetts, celebrated the tercentenary of the landing of the Pilgrims with many forms of hospitality, and proved itself a wonderful host, true to the fine Pilgrim traditions. The visitor was notified of its purpose many miles out of town, on the roads leading to Plymouth, where great wooden gates were set up, painted Colonial buff, and thrown open as far as they would go. On every gate was boldly printed: "The Gates of Historic Plymouth Are Thrown Wide Open." The symbol impressed itself upon the minds of thousands because it was so heartily carried out into deeds during the summer of 1921.

It is to be hoped that one of the permanent results in the lives of many will be not only a more generous hospitality in their homes, but the throwing open of the gates of many minds. Few people really possess what we so glibly call "open minds," though all are fond of saying that they have them. Minds are closed by prejudice, timidity, custom, sloth, hatred, conceit, stupidity. These pleasant agents work under cover, and few of us that harbour any of them are conscious of their presence.

They like to have the estates of our souls to themselves, they are expert in setting up barriers, and they amuse us with the proud pretence that we have open minds on all subjects, while at the same time they shut and padlock every gate.

Those who make many calls on business men soon classify them in two classes—the open gates and the closed gates. In some offices the occupant of the desk bends over his papers for the last possible instant, an acted parable of unwillingness. Reluctantly at last he lifts his head. In a surly way he growls, "What can I do for you?" He might quite as well shout at you, "State your business in a hurry and be out of here, you nuisance!"

But in another office the man at the desk wheels smartly around at the turn of the doorknob. Very probably he is out of his chair with his hand extended as soon as you open the door. "*Good* morning!" he cries, and you realize that it is good. He listens to you with all his face, and his interjections are brisk and eager. You feel like saving the time of so courteous a gentleman. You are surprised, when you go out, to see how short a call you have made, and to remember how much you have put into it. On thinking it over you may perceive that you have been the target of a dozen searching questions, each bringing out some phase of your subject. You have literally poured yourself into that friendly, open mind.

The wise old proverb bids us to entertain strangers hospitably, for sometimes we shall find that we have been entertaining angels unawares. This is quite as true of ideas as of persons. Many a thought, indeed sometimes a whole system of thought, which at first we suspect and have half a mind to shut the door in its face, turns out to be a very angel to our souls, a messenger of heavenly tidings, the bringer of comfort and strength. As we talk with it and live with it, the strange and forbidding aspect softens into a growing beauty, the curt sentences blossom and bear fruit, and where we fearfully admitted a vagrant. we rejoice in a new-found friend.

Of course we are to prove all these things, and to hold fast only to what is good. Open gates—of Plymouth or of the mind—are foolishly open if there is no police force behind them. The guardians of the law handled the immense crowds that thronged the little town with a fine mixture of courtesy and firmness. If there were pickpockets, they were put expeditiously out of the way; but the honest stranger was not regarded as a potential pickpocket.

Thus also the open-gated mind will give all ideas a chance to prove themselves, but will be quick to expel all that prove themselves unworthy, all that abuse the privilege of hospitality. Better not open the gates at all than welcome a warring and dis-

cordant company, angels and archangels, thieves and murderers.

But with this necessary qualification, how glorious is the open mind! What tribute of books flows into it—poems and stories, history and biography, science and travel! It gets plunder from Herodotus and McMaster, from Homer and Kipling, from Fielding and O. Henry. And what a rare procession of intelligences and experiences moves thither—the plumber and the professor, boys and girls and nonagenarians, Mayor Magnus and the bookkeeper of Cohen and Einstein!

Such a mind approaches all with expectation. It hopes all things from all men. It counts no life common or unclean until it tests it. It has the Saviour's lovely catholicity of receptiveness. If it does not find amid the entering throng a John to give, it may find a leper with a plea for healing. And who will say which did the most for the Saviour, the loving and understanding John or the healed and grateful leper?

"Opportunity" means "the open gate." Gates may be open to take in or to give out. Open minds mean duty as well as enrichment, responsibility as well as privilege. From him to whom much is given, much is required. Plymouth's open gates meant the inflow of some little wealth to the town, we hope; but they were thrown open that far more wealth might go out from the town, a wealth of

patriotic inspiration that has enriched the entire land.

And so let us keep open house in our souls. Let us be wide awake and kindly toward all men and all ideas. Let us draw into our kingdom from many lands, and make sure that our exports are equal to our imports. Freely let us receive, and as freely give.

XXV

READY!

"THAT which the fool does in the end," says a shrewd Spanish proverb, "the wise man does in the beginning." In many cases, however, the proverb points out only half the mischief, for often the procrastinator does not do the thing "in the end" any more than "in the beginning." Indeed, another Spanish proverb comes nearer the mark when it decisively asserts, "By the street of By-and-By one arrives at the house of Never."

The longer time we live, the more we distrust time, if we are observant. We are always having less time than we think. We cannot get used to the swiftness of time. Time steals up behind us unawares, and catches us with our most cherished plans all unaccomplished.

There is only one way to get the better of Master Time, and that is to do at once the thing which, a century or ten centuries hence, we shall be glad to have done at once. Put yourselves in imagination far ahead in your life, your endless life. Get the point of view, the just proportions, of eternity. Most of us have no more time or strength than will

suffice for the most important things. If we attend first to the trifles, we shall attend to nothing else.

The foolish virgins of to-day have much to keep them from the filling of their lamps. They have to make their wedding finery, or get it made for them. They have to arrange their hair in elaborate fashion. The night before, they are up late attending another party. They get lost in an exciting novel, and the time goes before they know it. No one is at a loss for excuses for procrastination.

And the trifles that keep us from being ready for the great things may easily appear more important than the great things. Trifles have loose skins, they can swell out to twice their real size. Form the habit of regarding trifles, and they will speedily fill the entire horizon of your life.

Carleton Jencks was the president of the Christian Endeavour Society on board the United States Steamship *Maine*. As it lay in Havana Harbour one evening, he was conducting a prayer meeting of the society. His theme was "I am ready," and those were the last words of his talk to the society. That night came the terrible explosion that killed Carleton Jencks and so many others, and led swiftly to the Spanish-American War.

How fortunate for Carleton Jencks that he had lived so nobly as always to be ready, since his Lord summoned him with no warning.

For the same reason every one of us should be ready. Our ship sails an unknown sea. Perils are

all around us. No one can be sure that the next minute will not be the supreme minute of his life. No one can be certain of anything except that uncertainties fill the future.

The young, if they think of the matter at all, hold that readiness is the duty of the middle-aged; the middle-aged agree that old folks should be ready for the serious things of life; while the old folks, if they reached old age carelessly, will doubtless continue carelessly in it. Readiness is a habit, to be learned in youth and cultivated through old age, since unreadiness also is a habit and is easily fixed.

Maltbie D. Babcock, the brilliant and beloved young minister whose life ended so suddenly and so tragically, once wrote: "No loving word was ever spoken, no glad deed was ever done, 'to-morrow.' To-day holds life and death, character and destiny, in its hands." Well did he fill his own days with loving service, and so he was ready for his to-morrows as they came.

Charles Dickens was another apostle of readiness. Few men have crowded so much into their days as he did, or been so strenuous workers. "If you think," he once wrote, "that you can achieve anything great or small by doing it only by fits and starts, put that erroneous idea out of your head at once." Nothing with him was "by fits and starts." He accomplished so much because he was always at it. He was ready for his next story because he was

incessantly gathering story material. His lamp was always full of oil.

There is just one thing we are not to be ready for, and that is sin! As Dr. Guthrie shrewdly advised his hearers, "If you intend to do a mean thing, wait till to-morrow; if you are to do a noble thing, do it now!" The two injunctions go together. If we fill our lives full of good, there will be no room for the evil. Those that are always ready for God will never be ready for the Adversary.

XXVI

THE TYRANNY OF TRIFLES

WHY is it that when you meet another person point blank on a narrow way, one of you yields the path and the other goes straight on? What determines who shall yield? The theory has been advanced that a swift eye-duel takes place, and the weaker will, thus determined, makes way for the stronger. That is pure guesswork.

William James, the philosopher, used to puzzle his pupils with a discussion of why, when he came to a fork in the Harvard campus path, one path leading around University Hall to the right and the other to the left, he should promptly take either the one or the other, and not remain there forever in indecision.

In one of George Herbert Palmer's fascinating lectures he has a similar illustration. He imagines himself in bed on a frosty morning, loath to get up. He thinks of a dozen reasons why he should get up, and of a dozen reasons why he should remain in his snug burrow. He rehearses the arguments painstakingly, but there is no result. Suddenly he throws back the bedclothes and finds himself out on the floor. How did he get there? What pulled the trigger of his will? No one knows.

Robert Frost, in a thoughtful poem, describes two branching paths through the woods; he is undecided which to follow. At last he chooses the path to the right, for no special reason, perhaps only because the grass on that path is a little less worn. And yet, muses the poet, eons hence as he looks back upon this earth life he may say, "I took the right-hand path that day, and that made all the difference."

The writer knows a young man whose conscience at one time almost drove him insane as he meditated on such matters as these. He would see a boy leaning on a fence, and would walk past him on his errand. Half an hour later he would think of that boy, would say to himself that he might have stopped and talked with him about the Christian life and might thereby have influenced him for eternity. Then he would go back, would fail to find the boy, and would lie awake all night torturing himself with the thought of his remissness.

More persons than we often realize are similarly under the tyranny of trifles. The hold of all superstitions is only one form of this tyranny. Some of the strongest minds the world has known—for example, that of Samuel Johnson—have been victims of this obsession.

Now trifles are often of vast importance, and destinies often hang upon them; but no destiny worth while ever comes to a man who is the slave of trifles. Christ's crown is reserved for the stanch soul that

fixes his gaze on the big thing, and brushes aside all the little things on his way toward the goal.

The Christian, like his Master, will have a keen eye for relative values. He will know when he dare take time for the engrossing details, and when he must forget them. Neatly arranged hair is important, sometimes; but to stop in the middle of a race and brush one's hair will lose the race, and the hair will remain ungarlanded.

It is a good plan to review one's day's work at night and see whether it might have been improved; but there are times when the best way to make sure of an improvement the next day is to go right to sleep, forgetting all about it. It is a good plan to be very solicitous regarding human relationships, eager for openings for evangelism, with a conscience sensitive to note all one's sloth and laxness; but sometimes it is best not only for ourselves but also for other folks that we push right through with our work, quite regardless of other folks.

Nothing in living will take the place of sturdy common sense. When we are perplexed about this matter and that, when we cannot be sure whether we are confronted by a trifle or by a supreme issue, it is good to fall back on what we know to be the opinion of the majority. What would stodgy Mrs. A——— and mediocre Mr. B——— and gruff Dr. C——— and commonplace Miss D——— think of our fears, our scruples, our anxious debates of conscience and duty? Would they laugh at

them, shrug their capable shoulders, tap their unwrinkled foreheads? Then we may well go on our way more serenely and allow time to decide for us.

A sense of humour is a good judge of trifles. How keen is a comedian after all exaggeration of values! How ready is a caricaturist to ridicule unrealities! If we can laugh at our frets and worries, we shall send them flying. Good cheer clears the air of vapours, and allows us to see distinctly where our pathway lies.

Above all, close companionship with Jesus Christ will free us from the tyranny of trifles. How sure was every step He took! He knew when to concern Himself with the little things and when to disregard them for the large things. He knew when to tarry at the well with the woman of Sychar, and when to cleave the Nazareth mob and go on His way. He could feed the five thousand, and order the fragments gathered up. He could still the storm, and He could point out a school of fish.

We can have the mind of Christ. To that mind all relative values are clear-cut. It is the mind of the Creator, who ordained the laws of the universe, and yet fashioned every vein in a butterfly's wing; who sent Orion spinning down the heavens, and yet notes the fall of a sparrow. Nothing will be too small for us, if we have the mind of Christ; and nothing trivial will be permitted to stand between us and the things that count the most.

XXVII

HOW IS YOUR HEAD SET ON?

THE few skulls of human beings which have been found in gravel beds that were formed far earlier than the earliest recorded history of mankind show us many bestial characteristics in these ancestors of our race. They were men, but of the crudest sort. They had retreating foreheads, almost no chins, great, protruding lips, and very little of the higher portions of the brain, the thought-producing portions. Most convincing, however, as hinting of the brute, is the hole in the skull where the backbone fits on, the hole through which passed the spinal cord. This hole is far back in the ancient skulls, and moves forward gradually as we examine skulls dating nearer our modern days. Present-day skulls are well balanced in the middle; their owners can hold up their heads. Prehistoric skulls were pivoted at the rear, and overweighted in front; their owners could not hold up their heads, any more than cows can, or pigs. They went around with their eyes and their thoughts fixed upon the ground.

It would be well if we could all bear in mind this bit of our human history. Even yet, in our day of

straight-walking men, we meet many whose heads are set on in the prehistoric fashion—if not the heads of their bodies, at any rate the far more important heads of their souls.

Usually they do not realize it; or, if they realize it, they do not care, they may even be proud of it. "I am practical," says such a hang head. "I keep my ear to the ground. No stargazing about *me*. I could buy out any ten men in my town. Books? I read my ledger and the market reports. Church? I make good use of Sunday in my office, while the other fellows are loafing. Family? I'll leave them the biggest fortune in Brown County, all in government and municipal bonds. Ideals? What do you mean by 'ideals'?"

Many a man who would be much distressed and thoroughly ashamed if he had a malformed neck which held his head bent downward, nevertheless goes through life with his soul bent double like a back-broken cripple. He would take his neck to the best surgeon in the country; he snaps his fingers at the surgeons of souls.

Of course we are not urging that men's souls any more than their heads should be set on in such wise that they lean backward. It would be as disastrous to be forced to gaze always at the sky as to have our countenances fastened upon the ground. As the skull opening for the spinal column moved forward, it came to a stopping point when it reached the central point: the well-balanced head, poised on the

erect body, looking straight ahead, and able to turn with equal ease to the ground and the sky. Any further movement forward would be no real progress, but a backward step in human development.

Looked at in this way, to call a person "level-headed" is indeed high praise. It implies good sense for the next world as well as for this world. It expresses the golden mean between empty idealism and barren practicality. It means tilling the ground when food is needed and climbing the mountains when inspiration is needed. It is a synonym of sure-footed progress.

It is very hard to convince any one that his head is set on wrongly. If he is a ground-gazer, he calls it mere prudence; if he is a moon-gazer, he calls it high thinking. Each has to look at the other view to realize its comfort or beauty; and how can he, if his head is set on wrong?

But if it is hard to correct another, it is easy to correct one's self, provided only that one is honest and desirous of the best.

For example, ask yourself such questions as these: Is it easy for me to give—to give money? or time? or sympathy? Is prayer a joy to me and Bible-reading a delight? Do I like the best poetry, Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Browning? Does a sunset or sunrise or the sight of the starry heavens fill me with awe and rapture? Do I long for the Lord's Day and for the assembly of the Lord's people? Do I live in the lives of others, finding my

chief sorrow in their grief and my chief joy in their happiness? If the answer to such questions as these must be "No," then the fulcrum of your head is set too far back, you are an earth-gazer.

Suppose, on the contrary, you test yourself with such inquiries as the following: Do my hopes and plans result in definite accomplishment? Do others turn to me when they want things done? Am I earning my own livelihood and the livelihood of those dependent on me, and setting aside a proper provision for sickness and old age? Do I make a wise use of my time? Am I an industrious and valued worker? Am I keeping my body in good health, and developing its strength and skill? Am I in touch with affairs, a real factor in the world around me? If in reply to such questions you must sadly say "No," then the fulcrum of your head is too far forward and your head is tipped backward, you are a moon-gazer.

And the remedy is in your own hands. You cannot change the position of your spinal column, but you can change the inclination of your soul. You can set your affections on things above, if they are engrossed with things below. Or if, on the contrary, your castles are all in the air, you can build solid foundations under them. You can be your own surgeon, with the aid of the Good Physician of souls.

XXVIII

HACK WORK

THE words, "hack work," bring up a picture of a scene almost forgotten already in our large and bustling cities. They remind us of the old-style hack, swaying, rickety, dusty inside and out, tattered, drafty, with hard and narrow seats, awkward to enter, equally awkward to leave. They also recall the old-time hack horse, thin and discouraged, switching his tail at the oppressive flies, his head hung down, his legs plodding at a poor, dying rate, galvanized into brief energy only by the application of the driver's broken whip. The hack stood at its post long hours at a time, the forlorn driver dozing in his seat, and when the rare passenger forced himself into notice the outfit lumbered painfully away, evidently sorry to be disturbed.

That is precisely the picture of hack work. It is slovenly, dreary, inefficient. There is no heart in it, no life. It is done from necessity or merely from habit. The hack worker is never so happy as when he can leave his work, and comes back to it with lagging steps. "I never wrote a line because I wanted to," once confessed a man whose task was writing for the press. He was a hack writer. Thus also there

are hack teachers and hack lawyers and hack clerks and hack carpenters and hack cooks. Hack work and hack workers are everywhere.

Now hack work cannot be good work, any more than hack transportation was an admirable mode of travel. The hack worker may be conscientious, but he leaves out of his labour the element which gives it its chief value, that of personal interest. The writer to whom writing is a bore will surely bore his readers. The teacher who despises teaching will be despised by his pupils. The cook who loathes cooking will turn out indigestible viands. "No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en," said Shakespeare truly.

But now, in all our large cities and in many of the smaller towns, the taxi has replaced the hack. "Taxi" comes from a Greek word that means "swift," and well does the vehicle live up to its name. Only a few days ago the writer took a mad taxi ride in Chicago which he will not soon forget. He was about a mile from the railway station, and his train would start in five minutes for the East. He had to catch that train, and a taxi fortunately slipped into sight. A word to the driver, and off we dashed through Chicago's busy streets, darting here, crowding in there, swirling around corners on one wheel, climbing insanely over curbstones, flying on the wings of the wind, and bringing up at the station just in time. Imagine the poor old hack and hack horse doing that trick! My train would have

left the station before the driver had unlimbered his whip.

Now, if you are a hack, the thing for you to do is to convert yourself into a taxi!

The thing can be done. It can be done more easily in the world of spirit than in the world of matter. Any one can do it, even the most confirmed old grind and drudge in the world, if he will set about it in the right way.

Two things make a taxi, gasoline and battery: the gasoline for potential energy, the electric battery to transform the potential energy into actual energy, to explode it. All the rest, the engine, the gears, the wheels, are only contrivances through which the gasoline and battery work, contrivances like the legs of the horse and the wheels and body of the hack.

What is the gasoline that will convert your hack work into taxi work? It is your enthusiasm. And what is the electric spark that will change your enthusiasm into actual power? It is the flame of the Holy Spirit of God. Put the two together—the Spirit's ardour and your ardour, and nothing that God wants you to do is impossible to you. All your tasks will move swiftly and joyfully to the goal of the highest success.

"But I cannot get up any enthusiasm for my work," you whine.

Exactly; that is why you are a hack; and you

will remain a hack to the end of your days if you do not change that "cannot" into "can."

For of course you can. Probably you do not know enough about your work. You have never made a real study of it. You have never even imagined its fine points, its many possibilities, its possible outreaches. You are a clerk? Read a book on the psychology of salesmanship! You are a cook? Learn what a calorie is, what proteids are! You are a railroad brakeman? Study the science and history of railroading and prepare to be the president of the road! There is a beautiful science in everything, even in digging a ditch. Learn the science, work in harmony with it, and you will become an enthusiast.

And of course you will not say that you cannot obtain for your work the fire of the Holy Spirit. You know that He is given to all that ask for Him. You know that He is eager to come to men, eager to help them in their tasks. You know that there need be no delay: an instant's petition, an instantaneous response.

Oh, the difference when God's Spirit gets into a life! Plans are exalted, purposes ennobled. All circumstances are lifted into the realm of romance. Our desires are purified and enormously strengthened. Our will becomes an irresistible force. A wholly new exhilaration thrills through us. The tasks that have been loathsome we now long for. The work that has dragged now leaps and runs.

We have ceased to be hacks and have become taxis, "swifts" in very truth. We mount up with wings as eagles, we run and do not grow weary, and we walk and do not faint.

XXIX

GIVEN TO GOD

I LIVE near the missionary home of one of the large denominations, a beautiful building in which the children of missionaries are cared for while their parents are at work on the mission fields of China, Japan, India, Africa, all the world. These missionaries want their children to grow up as good Americans; and so when they are about ten years old they bring them to this home, and leave them there for their public-school training, after which they are sent off to college. The parents do not see them except once in seven years, as they return for their sabbatical year at home.

The parting from these beautiful boys and girls is as sad a thing as one could see in all the world, and wrings one's heart to witness or think about; and yet both missionaries and their children endure it gladly for the sake of their Master and His work among men. The missionaries have given themselves to God, and when they made that gift they kept back nothing, not even the thing they valued most, their children. The children also have given themselves to God. They have received the missionary spirit, and many of them become missionaries in their turn. When they yielded themselves

to God they yielded also their chief joy, the loving care of father and mother. This is the beautiful drama of consecration which I have seen going on for many years in our Auburndale missionary home.

All real gifts to God are of this sort—whole-hearted, ready, exultant. We have a phrase, "given in marriage," and it is like that when one is given to God. "With all my worldly goods I thee endow" is only a formal and very unnecessary part of a true wedding. When two people really love each other, each would rather the other used a possession than use it himself or herself. The height of enjoyment is to use things in common. And the Bible uses the same illustration, picturing the Church as the bride of Christ.

All development lies along the line of self-giving. If the seed lived for itself, and did not fling itself out happily into the air, there would be no blossom or tree. Good teachers are made by interest in their pupils. Men of business succeed as they believe in their goods and are eager for all the world to have them. The higher the giving, the nobler the development. Phillips Brooks once said, "One of the blessings of your consecration to Christ will be that in Him will open up to you as a pattern your possible self as God sees it." The self that is given to God becomes Godlike, however unworthy it may have been at the start.

The fundamental fact is that God can give Him-

self wholly to men only as they give themselves wholly to Him. Make a break in the wire so that it does not yield itself fully to the electricity, and the dynamo can do no work along that circuit. The wheels of the automobile must be geared stoutly to the engine, or the gasoline will explode in vain, and the car will stand motionless. "If we would know the power of Christ's life," says J. Stuart Holden, "Christ must know the power of our complete surrender to Him."

So this giving of ourselves to God is not a duty but a wonderful privilege. No young man counts it a hardship to be admitted to membership in a prosperous firm, but gives himself to it gladly. Men struggle for years with all the energies of body and mind, that they may have the glory of giving themselves to some high office, some position of splendid responsibility. When we give ourselves to God we are admitted into the most exalted partnership, inducted into the most glorious office, even placed beside Him on His throne.

The danger is that we shall allow our lesser givings to overshadow this one supreme giving. We need to give ourselves in many ways, to many persons and occupations. We must give ourselves to our family, our business, our studies, our neighbours and friends and employers, our work in the world. God would not have it otherwise. Giving ourselves to all these is a part of our giving ourselves to Him.

But oh, the giving of ourselves to Him must come first! Until the wire is joined to the dynamo, how useless it is to join it to the light bulb in your house! Seek first the Kingdom of God, and then all things will be effectively added to you—your dear ones, your tasks, your possessions, your life itself. Put first things first in your giving, and your receiving will never end.

XXX

"THANK YOU!"

SOME folks seem to find it very difficult to say "Thank you!" They are over-independent, and are afraid of coming under obligation to any one. Or, they are exceedingly reserved, and the expression of any gratitude appears to be an unveiling of their heart's secrets. Or, they are basely suspicious, and cannot believe that any one would do them a kindness without an ulterior motive. Or, they are merely awkward, and fail to find adequate words for their genuine thankfulness. Or, they are hugely conceited, and believe that whatever is done for them is only their due. Or, they are grasping and avaricious and covetous, always dissatisfied with benefits because always expecting more than they receive. There are many reasons why certain persons fail to say "Thank you!"

On the other hand, some folks find it very easy and delightful to say "Thank you!" They love to be "beholden" to others, for they rejoice in "the ties that bind our hearts in Christian love." They count it almost a sin to be stingy in gratitude where others have been generous in giving. They

love so widely and so heartily that they readily attribute such love to others. They have practised saying "Thank you!" until it has become instinctive and graceful. They are humble, and consider any attention shown them to be more than they deserve. They are always contented, and so are "thankful for small favours," and magnify them into large favours. For these reasons and many others these happy spirits are always saying "Thank you!"

Now we do not confer kindnesses just for the sake of being thanked. We benefit others because of a sense of justice, a feeling of their need, and a real affection for them. Many persons even find it disagreeable and awkward to be thanked, and avoid expressions of gratitude whenever they can, doing their kindnesses anonymously and under cover. This feeling represents a lack in those givers perhaps, a sensitiveness that is out of touch with human brotherhood; but it is often present, and we cannot always be sure that we are giving pleasure when we say "Thank you!" however heartily.

All the more need, then, of saying it so finely, so beautifully, so lovingly, that the little ceremony will mean much on both sides. Even if the gift is made ungraciously, let it be taken graciously. Even if it is presented awkwardly, let it be received with royal tact.

There are not many occasions, after all, when

lives make contact with one another. We move in strangely separate orbits, and are sadly ignorant of one another's joys and sorrows, fears and hopes, failures and successes. A gift is a point of contact. In a gift two lives really touch; and it is a shame if the contact is only that of dead wires, not of wires alive with the electricity of love. The opportunity to say "Thank you!" is one of life's rare opportunities to draw very close to another soul. It is especially precious because the opportunity has come to us, we have not had to go out and seek it.

No one will meet this opportunity well without practice. How can we practise saying "Thank you!" without having gifts that call for gratitude?

Ah, but we have them! We have them all the time. We can practise saying "Thank you!" every day and every hour.

Whoever has insight into his own life and the world around him knows that they are fairly overflowing with occasions for gratitude. "This goodly frame, the earth," is a cornucopia of joys, a crowded basket of blessings. Every day begins with a tumbling heap of them, the renewing of life, the glad inrush of light, the morning scents, the flood of colour, the ecstacy of sound, the delights of motion, the satisfaction of food, the comforts of home, the love of our dear ones, the blessings of the Bible, the infinite honour of prayer! And as the

day proceeds every instant of it brings new incentives to praise. The responsive soul is bathed in thanksgiving as a sunny atmosphere, is saying "Thank you!" constantly to God, and so is ever in the mood to say "Thank you!" to men.

Indeed, like all other graces, the grace of gratitude is itself a gift from the grace of God. We do not come by it naturally but supernaturally. Just as the lower animals are without gratitude except as, in such cases as the dog, the cat, and the horse, they have been longest with man and have caught something of his spirit, so men have this high grace quite in proportion as their lives are close to God and have caught His Spirit. Gratitude is a flower of love, and "God is love." All that love are born of God, and so are all that are truly grateful.

The cure for lack of gratitude is more prayer. Only as we live in communion with the Lord of all grace can this grace become ours. "We love, because He first loved us," and because He first loved us we have this power of love which is called gratitude. The nearer we come to God, the easier and more delightful we shall find it to say "Thank you!"

Gratitude, therefore, is far from being mere politeness. Gratitude reaches to the very center of life. Gratitude is one of the most certain tests of character. Saying "Thank you!" is a divine ordinance, the God-blessed meeting of two souls. If

we are careless about it, we are careless concerning our eternal interests and those of other men; but if we enter into the spirit of it and exalt it in our plans and our affections, we shall be exalted by it, and lifted very high in the joys and powers of the heavenly world.

XXXI

THE WAY THAT HAS ITS WAY

DURING the World War many thousands—indeed, millions—of men had occasion to think about the voice of command.

The voice of command is the voice that gets obeyed. Some otherwise excellent officers did not have it. They would issue their orders in a hesitant and apologetic way, or in a voice that was husky or flabby. While they were talking to their men the minds of the latter would wander, and their eyes as well.

In the very companies of these officers would be sergeants or even corporals whose first syllable stirred the blood, sent a responsive thrill through nerve and muscle, and shot the soldier to his feet. They had the voice of command.

There is much also in the bearing of command. Some officers had an authoritative look. Alert, splendidly poised, you would think them Napoleons or Alexanders. They carried themselves as persons born to the purple, accustomed to issuing orders and receiving obedience.

Others, on the other hand, though in positions of considerable authority, received scanty respect be-

cause their bearing was slipshod; they did not look the part of commander. They were not well set up, they did not carry themselves as soldiers should.

Now in war it is the business of an officer to have his way. He must insist upon it. That officers should be obeyed is a matter of victory or defeat, of life or death, of success or failure for a great cause. So necessary is it that officers should be obeyed that the death penalty hangs over the man who disobeys, and helps the commander to have his way even if his voice and bearing would never get it for him.

And in the long, steady warfare of life it is equally necessary for the Christian warrior to have his way. No egotism, no pride, no obstinacy or ambition, prompts Christians to insist on their way; only the fact that their way is the way of their Master, of Him who is the Way. The Kingdom of God, the happiness or woe of all mankind, depend on Christians getting their way, and they are perfectly right in urging it. It is their duty to do so.

Therefore it is just as necessary for the Christian as for the lieutenant, the captain, or the colonel, to cultivate the way that has its way. Whatever it may be—voice, or bearing, or structure of sentences, or clothing, or habits of life, or habits of thought—whatever contributes to the effectiveness of character, to positive and immediate influence

over others, must be counted in as an essential part of a Christian's duty. It is our business to have a way with us that is irresistible.

This way is not the same with all Christians, and nothing here is more foolish than imitation. The authority of a Christian is a part of himself, and partakes of his own character. One man's secret of leadership is never another's.

Moreover, this quality of leadership permeates all that a leader is or does. The way that has its way may be discerned even in a person's handwriting, though leaders have the widest diversity of chirographies; the vigour of strong personalities is to be discerned in them all.

But, though the outward phases of leadership are as varied as personalities are varied, the inner reality and source of it is uniform. The way that has its way is essentially a spiritual quality. Whoever has received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven has the Petrine characteristics, he is a rock, strong as a rock, enduring as a rock, vibrant as a rock to the hammer of fate, and yet tender as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Being all this, the same qualities of sturdiness, of firmness, of resonance, of kindliness, flash out in word or deed, in bearing or attire, in all the numberless concomitants of life. Leadership is an affair of the soul.

That is why whoever would have his way with men must not fritter away his time with surface

matters. No elocutionist can teach the voice of command, no actor can teach the bearing of command, no penman or college professor of English can teach authoritative writing. The soldier must have or obtain the spirit of an officer, or he will be only a private in an officer's uniform. The Christian must not think about his uniform or accoutrements, but about his spirit, if he would be a leader.

And that is why Christ coupled with the promise of becoming fishers of men the command to follow Him. It is only by long fellowship with Christ that Christ's disciples can gain Christ's influence over human souls. Our Lord draws all men to Himself because He is lifted up on the cross of eternal sacrifice. We also gain a like drawing power as we are crucified with Christ. "Ye are my friends," said Christ, "if ye do the things which I command you." And if we thus become friends of Christ His power of command passes into us. This is one of the "all things" that are ours because we are Christ's.

By living with even a human being we absorb his ways. If they are ways that have their way, we also become more persuasive, more convincing, more authoritative. Thus also by living with Christ, we in Him and He in us, we get His ways, and they are the ways of command, the ways that compel obedience, though no one thinks of them except as the ways of love and wisdom.

It is a pleasure to have our way. It is a joy to feel influence going out from us, to know that our life is leading others along right and happy paths. This is one of the entirely legitimate joys of the Christian, because his way is not his own, but his Master's. The Christian has thus a right to the way that has its way, and no one else on earth has a right to it.

XXXII

OVERCOMING OUR PREJUDICES

FEW words in the English language are so significant as the word "prejudice." It means pre-judgment, decision regarding a person or a thing made before one has sufficient knowledge to warrant a judgment. The implication of the word itself is that some judgments are unwise, and fundamentally unrighteous. To judge before we know enough to judge is to "judge unjust judgments." The implication of the word is that if we knew more about the person or the thing our opinion would be different, probably far more favourable.

It is true that most of our prejudices are born of ignorance. Rich people have a prejudice against poor people until they learn how much nobility and grace may dwell beneath a threadbare coat. Poor people have a prejudice against rich people until they discover how sympathetic the wealthy often are, and how eager to help. Presbyterians may have prejudices against Methodists and Methodists against Lutherans, but coming to know some real Christian of another faith will quickly break down the barrier.

This is because prejudices are based on unreasonable generalizations, and slink away before a single disproving example. We say that no person with a receding chin can be anything but a fool; then we meet some one who has a receding chin, but turns out to be a very wise man, and at once we perceive that brains are not kept in jawbones.

Now if prejudices mean ignorance, they should be overcome. We do not want to go through the world blind to the real qualities of persons and things, without the stimulus and joy of their excellencies, living lives barren of much of the friendship and many of the admirations that might have been ours. We want to live the abundant life, and that is only possible when all the windows and doors of our minds are open to receive all that is good and fair and noble.

There is another reason why prejudices are to be overcome, and that is because they are weakening and annoying. Form a prejudice against Jews, and the world will seem full of them, and the Jewish menace will rise like a thundercloud over our nation. Form a prejudice against the smell of peppermint and you will be harassed everywhere by that odour. Prejudices lay your peace of mind open to a thousand chances against which you cannot provide. Prejudices fill your lives with little stings and invite a myriad trifling frets and worries.

We have gone far toward overcoming our prej-

udices when we recognize how unreasonable they are likely to be, and how hurtful. Then the will power must come in. Then we must determine to get close to the object of our prejudice, and to learn the full truth about it. The sooner we do this, the better; prejudices toughen quickly, and the longer we cherish them the harder they are to uproot.

Of course we may find that our prejudice is justified; we may discover that the thing we dislike is really hurtful, the person really deserving of scorn. If that is the case, we are no worse off than before, and we are far more reasonable. Indeed, this understanding of the matter may enable us to remedy it, to remove our prejudice by reforming the object of it. That is the best of all ways to overcome a prejudice which has proved to be well grounded.

This task of getting close to people whom we do not like is hard for most of us because it requires so much imagination. We must put ourselves in their places, by the exercise of a delicate, sympathetic, and persevering fancy, before we can hope to understand them. The story of the rich woman who, when she learned that certain poor people could not get enough bread, asked impatiently, "Then why don't they live on cake?" does not greatly exaggerate the difficulty many have in comprehending the lot of others. It is indeed hard for one who has always slept on a soft bed to guess at the experience of sleeping on bare boards. It

needs a loving insight for one who has never been seriously ill, or never has committed a grievous sin. to put himself in the place of a lifelong invalid or one who has fallen under sore temptation. These things are hard, but they are not impossible, and they are gloriously worth doing.

It is just such work that brings us into genuine fellowship with the Saviour. How could He, the sinless one, not only avoid prejudice against the harlots and extortioners of His day, but even get so close to them as to draw them up into His own beautiful living? It was not through any sentimental blindness to evil, any weak complaisance, any cowardly conformity—far from that. It was simply because His great love made Him greatly understanding. His great love gave Him wonderful insight. Thus it was that He, the sinless, was tempted in all points as the most sinful are tempted, and by sympathy could help them. The more closely we live with Him, the more of this tender and yet powerful imagination will be ours, through love.

"Judge not" is one of His most necessary injunctions; "judge not, that ye be not judged." We forget that every prejudice is a judgment, and the most miserable of all judgments, a snap judgment, a judgment in the absence of the defendant and his advocate and before the evidence is all in, perhaps before any evidence is in.

There is a Judge that sits in judgment over all

such injustices. Some day He will condemn our prejudices as severely and justly as our sins. Every day that we allow them, and do not combat them in Christ's spirit and with His power, we heap up condemnation for ourselves. "Judge" is an honourable title, and every Christian may sit upon the supreme bench of brotherly and winsome justice; but "pre-Judge" is a title of dishonour. If any of us have deserved it, let us get rid of it forever.

XXXIII

FACING A HARD TASK

OUR faces have much to do with our conduct, and our conduct with our faces. The Chinese are not far wrong in the emphasis they place on "making face," "saving face," or "losing face." When we speak of "facing a hard task" the phrase has a literal as well as a metaphorical meaning. Let us consider a few of the literal aspects of this facing of our work. Let us view our task in connection with the various features of our face.

The very first injunction, when a hard task is to be faced, may seem strange: *Face it with a grin!* Observe that this is not saying, "Face it with a smile." It may be too difficult and distasteful for that, but any one can manage a grin. That is, be cheerful about it. You might just as well. Regard it in the light of a game, say a football game. That is hard enough: sawing wood is nothing to it; but most players contrive to go into a game with a grin, however set and sardonic. Look ahead to the victory. You are going to pull through on top. You are going to feel mighty good about it after it is done. Yes, you can face it with a grin.

Then, back of the grin, *Face it with clinched teeth!* Hard tasks need hard grit. Their happy termination calls for determination. They are severe, but persevere! Some way, firm-set teeth mean firm-set muscles. Some way, a clinched jaw clinches the soul. If you say to yourself, "I will," and keep on saying it, the will is pretty likely to become the deed. It is not for nothing that the bulldog has the most decided mouth of all the canines: he has the most decided character. You need not make a bulldog of yourself, but it is decidedly well to get a bulldog grip on your work.

For another feature, seemingly far removed from the point but really very close to it, *Face your task with listening ears!* To return to our metaphor of a game, you know how much of football success depends on hearing and heeding the coach's advice and listening tensely for the captain's cryptic numbers. You will never get through a hard task as you should if you do not listen to others who have done hard things. Get their experience. You can get it through conversation, through books, through lectures and sermons. It is only the fool that scorns good advice and lightly faces his task with cotton in his ears.

Next consider the nose. You think that has nothing to do with facing a hard task? You are in error. For every piece of difficult labour has its own fragrance; and it makes all the difference in the world if you sniff its lovely aroma eagerly,

or hold your nose as if you were in the Chicago stock yards. It is the fragrance of the fresh morning air blowing over the awakening fields. It is the fragrance of boundless prairies, the tang of the adventurous ocean. Tasks have different fragrances, some of the violet, some of the lily, some of the rose, some of bold spruces and hardy pines. The fragrance of a task is its grace, and makes us gracious toward it. Yes, our noses have much to do with the proper facing of hard tasks.

Further, *Face your tasks with praying lips!* It is sad work attempting a difficult enterprise alone; it is easy and delightful if our all-loving, all-wise, and all-powerful Partner engages with us. Said a mournful widow once, most pathetically, "Now I have no one to ask, '*Would you?*'" But she did have some one to ask, "Would you?" The habit —which she indeed had if ever a woman had—of talking matters over with the Father and Elder Brother is the true joy and strength of comradeship. If we face our hard tasks with praying lips, they are already half accomplished. We can readily see through them, we can bravely get through them, if we pray through them.

And if we face our tasks with praying lips, it will not be long before we *face them with a singing mouth.* The cheerful grin with which we started will burst into a happy smile. Our songs will testify to our serenity. It is glorious to sing at one's tasks. We do not do it unless the work is

going well, and if we do it the work goes better still. A singing workman needs no other letter of commendation. The tools of a singing workman are always sharp, his hands are always quick. This is a matter not taught in the technical schools, but it is an essential of true technique. The employer, too, can sing when his workmen face their task with singing mouths.

One feature remains: *Face your task with lighted eyes!* That is what will happen surely if you have already faced your task in the way described. Eyes aglow with the light of victory. Eyes shining with the joy of full accomplishment. Eyes that gleam with the vision of larger tasks to come.

"Are his eyes lighted, or are they dull?" The answer to that question will tell all that one needs to know about a workman. Of men in mass, the answer to that question will condemn or exalt a labour system, a social order. Wherever men face their tasks with dull eyes something is fatally wrong with the men themselves, with their employers, or with both. For the right work, pursued with the right spirit under right conditions, lights such a flame in human eyes that even the angels look upon it with a thrill.

XXXIV

WHEN PEOPLE TOOK TIME FOR REAL LETTER WRITING

THE art of letter writing is not altogether lost to the modern world. One illustration of it is the remarkable letter written by Theodore Roosevelt describing his visits in Europe after his famous hunting trip in Africa. That letter made a good-sized book, and is one of the most brilliant pieces of writing in American literature, yet we may be sure that it was dashed off with characteristic Roosevelt vim and zest.

As a whole, however, in spite of notable exceptions, our modern letter writing is telegraphic in its brevity and more than telephonic in its curtness. We do not write letters, we send picture post-cards. Indeed, it has come to be quite the fashion—and a most silly and spendthrift fashion it is—to impress our business vigour upon correspondents by the use of the telegraph for quite ordinary business communications.

In the old days they knew better. They knew that a well-written letter is an event. It expresses personality in a more memorable way than mere interviews. This is because the letter is read more

slowly than we listen to speech, and often it is read over and over. It may be read to others, and so its influence may be greatly extended. When I was a boy I often attended groups of my townsfolk that gathered to listen to the prodigiously long but vastly informing and entertaining letters from Europe written by an old-fashioned lady from our Ohio town who had a fondness alike for travel and for letter writing. Those letters were read in a number of communities and were printed in the papers. Such epistles are seldom written to-day.

Did you ever read the letter written by George Crabb to Edmund Burke soliciting financial aid? It is one of the most remarkable begging letters ever composed. It is not far from three thousand words long, and testifies to equal leisure in the author and the recipient. It is so beautifully phrased as to be the best possible witness to the ability and literary character of the writer, and its appeal is made with charming dignity and manliness. Begging by mail is said to have become a science to-day, but its practitioners have much to learn from this writer of a century and a half ago.

Wonderful letters were written by the wife of Thomas Carlyle, and one of the most remarkable, considering who wrote it and that it was written to her irascible husband, is her missive about a pestiferous dog that would bark, and how she procured the silencing of the cur: "'Bow-wow-wow' roared the dog, and dashed the cup of fame from

my brow. 'Bow-wow-wow' again, till the whole universe seemed turned into one great dog kennel! I hid my face in my hands and groaned inwardly. 'Oh, destiny accursed! What use of scrubbing and sorting? All this availeth me nothing, so long as the dog sitteth at the washerwoman's gate!'" All this play over what must have been a real torture.

Would that every son might read Thomas Carlyle's tender letter to his old mother just before her death: "I am now myself grown old, and have had various things to do and suffer for so many years; but there is nothing I have had to be so much thankful for as the mother I had." Most sons think they are too busy to write such letters to their mothers.

If any one wishes to know what religion can do to sustain one in the most distressing circumstances, let him read Charles Lamb's letter to Coleridge written soon after his beloved sister Mary had, in a fit of sudden insanity (and Charles himself had been in a madhouse) killed her dearly loved mother and wounded her beloved father. "Is it folly or sin in me," asks poor Lamb, "to say that it was a religious principle that most supported me?"

If any one wants to know how a man can lavish himself upon his friends, let him read the many long letters by Charles Dickens preserved for us in Forster's biography. With what unstinted generosity the great novelist bestowed upon them valuable copy and priceless time and the overflow of his buoyant spirits!

The masters of English letter writing, such as Walpole, Lamb, Thackeray, Lady Mary Montagu, FitzGerald, Haydon, Coleridge, and Stevenson, each has his excellency, each teaches a lesson to our heedless, over-busy, and unsympathetic days. No letter writer of them all, however, equals Paul. What tenderness in his epistles, what eloquence, what profundity of wisdom, what convincing floods of logic! For a model of letter writing we cannot do better than to turn to this apostle, and imitate as best we can his thoughtfulness, his self-giving, his vigour, his courage, and his devotion.

XXXV

YOUR OWN SLOGANS

SLOGANS have always been powerful in the history of nations. From Cato's "*Delenda est Carthago,*" "Carthage must be destroyed!" down to "They shall not pass!" of the World War, these battle cries have been effective for pulling down or for setting up. We remember Franklin's "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately"; and Luther's "Here I stand; I can do no otherwise"; and Webster's "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable"; and Lincoln's plea for "a government of the people, by the people, for the people." "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute!" "England expects every man to do his duty!" "Fifty-four forty or fight!" Slogans like these have made history. Some of them are still making history.

In civil life slogans have been quite as useful as in days of war. They have played a mighty part in politics, as "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too" bears witness, and William Jennings Bryan's famous cry that humanity must not be crucified on a cross of gold.

At nearly every turn in human thought or action

the way is marked by a slogan: "Pike's Peak or bust!" "Back to the land!" "Efficiency!" "A living wage!" "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." We shall not soon forget Charles Wagner's insistence on "the simple life" and Roosevelt's vigourous emphasis of "the strenuous life." Whoever has been able to pack a social theory into a taking phrase has done much to move men his way.

Now the value of a slogan is as great in a private life as in the larger life of the public. Our readers have probably forgotten those oblong little mottoes, white letters on a black background, "Do It Now!" Twenty years ago this motto stared at one from thousands of business desks; doubtless it pulled thousands of business men out of the slough of endless procrastination. It did that for the writer, and he keeps the motto still on his desk at home.

Of similar purport are the hortatory rhymes that stick in one's memory, such as the following couplet which we have carried over from boyhood:

> "Lose this day loitering, 'twill be the same story
> To-morrow, and the next more dilatory."

The makers of proverbs, those unknown benefactors and leaders of the human race, often used this powerful aid of rhyme, as in the alluring maxim,

> "Early to bed and early to rise,
> Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

But proverbs without number have relied on the briefer and manlier prose. "God helps them that help themselves," for example, has put a stouter backbone into millions of mortals. "Many littles make a mickle" has induced millions to practise fundamental thrift.

There is a reason for the power of slogans, and that reason is the economy of attention and of memory. This is the reason that first pointed an arrow, in order that the energy of the taut bow-string might be focused upon a single vital spot. It is the reason for a burning-glass, the reason for a telescope and a microscope, bringing all the rays of a light to one fiery or illuminating point. A slogan does exactly this for a mind and a soul.

And since slogans are thus useful, let every man employ them in the direction of his own life. In no easier and surer way can he guide his course to the desired haven. He can set up his own light-houses and fasten his own North Star in the sky.

Some, who are expert in words, will be interested in fashioning their own slogans, while others will be content with the slogans of others. Discovering and adopting them will suffice for originality.

The writer, for example, once read a very noble article on the joy of pleasing Christ—how few persons really set out to please our precious Redeemer, how glad He must be when His brothers care to give Him joy, how easily we can please Him, how glorious are the results of such an endeavour. The

article made such an impression that ever since one of the slogans of his life has been, "Please Christ!" It is a very intimate slogan, kept for the quiet hours of heart communion, but it certainly has tided him over many a temptation and helped him accomplish many a difficult task.

Edward Everett Hale once wrote a very inspiring book which should never grow obsolete, "Ten Times One Is Ten." It told about an earnest young fellow whose life motto was

> "Look up and not down,
> Look forward and not back,
> Look out and not in,
> And lend a hand."

He died early, and ten of his friends decided that, in memory of him, each would try to live out those Wadsworth mottoes and get one other person to do the same. So the circle widened, at first slowly, very rapidly at last, until one happy day it was discovered that the entire population of the world was trying to live up to the slogan. That was the story, and ever since it was published the number has been growing of those who have made the Wadsworth mottoes their own.

But, of course, the greatest reservoir of life's slogans is the Bible, and in the Bible the greatest collection is the Sermon on the Mount. From the Psalms and Proverbs; from Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, and Jeremiah; from the four Gospels and the Acts; from the Epistles of James and First John; from

Paul's letters, every one of them, can be taken little guide-boards to all the complicated roads and foot-paths of life. Blessed is the man who scans them all and sets them all up in his memory. It is a wise plan to adopt one of these sacred slogans and live by it until it has become an ingrained part of character; and then another, and another. For a slogan's work is not completed until it has buried itself so far in accomplishment that it has ceased to be a slogan and has become a life.

XXXVI

MIND SWITCHES

ONE of the most harmful habits that we can form is that of brooding over disagreeable matters, over slights, wrongs, failures, griefs, losses, difficulties, mistakes, disappointments. Such brooding is the dry rot of the soul. Quiet, silent, making no outward sign, it carries on its deadly work in secret, and at last inevitably shows itself outwardly, sometimes in the most tragic way.

Such brooding as this destroys one's happiness completely. The heavens are black, the earth is a prison, all food is poison, all life is misery. The darkest cynicism is the result, utter hatred, a heart turned to gall and wormwood. Monomania, insanity, suicide, murder, these are some of the results of such persistent brooding.

The habit is most easily formed. We drift into it before we know it. We are not often taught to recognize the deadly peril and to fight against it. The first injury finds us unprepared to turn it aside. We receive it into our soul and let it rankle. We do not know how to forget it. We do not want to forget it. We want to remember it and have

our revenge. When the revenge does not come, we begin to brood.

When a railway freight train sets out, it is made up of many cars, and the cars have many different destinations. Its crew must know where the proper switches are and how to open and shut them. The crew must know how to uncouple cars, how to back the train upon a siding, how to leave there the cars it ought to leave there, couple up again, and move off blithely down the main track. The freight business is the main business of the railroads, and the switch is the main factor of the freight business. There would not be much railroading without it.

Something precisely analogous to this must be done if one would use his mind to the best advantage, get the most out of it for himself, use it most helpfully for the rest of the world. There are mind switches that are just as effective as any switch of steel. It is easily possible to detach cars from a "train of thought," run them on to a siding, leave them there, and go whirling triumphantly down the road without them. It is all a matter of using the right keys and turning the right switches. The art of doing this is one of the most useful a man can learn.

Many men who are most masterful in other directions are helpless as babies regarding their minds. Every thought that is suggested to them they feel obliged to entertain. Every poisonous idea must be cherished, once it gets in. All foul-

nesses must accumulate there, for they know no method of cleansing the mind. Everywhere else they are resolute and aggressive; in their mental realm they are abject slaves to chance. The very conception of mind switches is foreign to them. They are not lords of their minds, but their minds are lords of them.

The wise man, on the contrary, owns his mind. He uses it as an instrument. He commands it, and it obeys. He does not allow it to become a burden, but forces it to carry his burdens. He couples them on and switches them off at his royal pleasure.

The wise man drills his mind to hard tasks. He accustoms it to work. He does not ceaselessly coddle it with fiction, but holds it down regularly to substantial reading and useful studies. He does not skip the editorials in the newspapers, the solid articles in the magazines, the volumes of history and biography and thoughtful essays. He accustoms his mind to ignore distractions and concentrate itself upon matters best worth its while. Thus he trains his mind to take the switches.

The wise man has the advantage of the railroads in that he can carry his switches with him. He always keeps at hand some pleasant and profitable thoughts to act as sidings on which he can switch his mind, and leave his burdens there. One man will meditate upon some happy event in his life, or some person whom he loves and who loves him.

Another man will fall to thinking of some passage in the life of a Bible character, amplifying it with the exercise of a useful imagination. Others will have chains of Bible verses to repeat, or beautiful poems which they have stored away in memory. Others will fall to planning some advance in their work or some kindness they will carry out. Others will turn to praying, and will have a period of blessed communion with their Father in heaven.

All these mind switches are in actual use by thousands of men. They are of very different absolute value, but they may all serve efficiently as switches. They all keep us from brooding over what it does no good to brood over. They all enable us to drop our burdens of anger or sorrow or despair or worry, and go lightly on our way again.

The art of mental discipline may be entered upon at any time, and any one may make a beginning. Whatever we do of this sort renders it easier to do more. Our power grows rapidly, delightfully. At first we can get rid of our mind troubles only slowly and with considerable effort. Soon we become able to toss them aside instantly, decisively, and permanently. The switches work smoothly and swiftly.

When a man has thus gained the mastery of his mind he employs this control not only for getting rid of the bad, but also still more usefully for the taking on of the good. Switches are for loading as

well as for unloading. His "trains of thought" are always full of goodly merchandise, they are never "empties." They roll swiftly to their destination. They make rich profit for their owner, and they contribute to the welfare of mankind.

XXXVII

THE DUTY OF FEELING FIT

IT is the fashion of many to disregard their feelings. Will power is everything with them. "I work whether I feel like it or not," "I don't let my emotions control me," "I am bossing my life"—that is what they virtually say. They may feel sick, but they go to work just the same. They may dislike a certain person, but they treat him just as if he were a bosom friend. They force disagreeable undertakings through, regardless of their hatred of them. They are consistently masters of themselves—or think they are.

In reality this disregard of the feelings is a mere sham, and harmful as all shams are. It is a sham because the feelings have their way in spite of our wills. We may put through the task that we detest, but it is not so well accomplished as it would be if we were enthusiastic for it. We may do our work while feeling sick, but the job is sickly. We may be polite to persons to whom our hearts do not go out, but we cannot deceive them into a real friendship. Nothing goes so swiftly against the current of the feelings as with it.

That is why every duty, if it is a genuine duty, includes the duty of feeling fit. To be "fit" is to be zealous, eager, alert. It is to go at the work with a zest, an appetite. It implies a leaping spirit, not a dragging one; mind muscles taut, not lax. Originally applied to physical readiness for athletic contests, "fit" is properly transferred to mental and spiritual activity. It is the swing of the victor, the promise and potency of achievement.

When thus we feel fit at the outset of a task there is no need of forcing ourselves, of urging ourselves forward. A light is in our eye, a song in our heart. Nothing could keep us from our work; it has become the most exhilarating enjoyment to us. It fits us like a well-made coat, no hitches, no sags, no wrinkles. We fit it, a round peg in a round hole. That is the way work goes when we feel fit, and of course the result is the very best we are capable of producing.

Since this is the effect of feeling fit, it is manifestly our duty to feel fit whenever it is our duty to do anything, and as far as it is possible for us to feel fit.

Thus duty includes, very plainly, the duty of health. No one is doing his duty by his work if he does not bring to it all the physical ardour he is capable of obtaining by exercise, recreation, and sleep. Merely dragging through a task, with ach-

ing head, frayed nerves, and exhausted vitality is not doing the work, but half doing it. Many a man with a well-trained, mature theological conscience has the health conscience of an infant. This is taking it for granted that bodily health has no theological standing, which is far from being the case. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and "feeling fit" physically is therefore very closely related to spiritual fitness.

But one can feel fit so far as the body is concerned and not feel at all fit so far as the mind is concerned. Many seem to regard physical fitness as sufficient. "Fine and fit" they call themselves when they have no headache, when their muscles are responsive, when their circulation is good, and their nervous tension high. All the time they may be nursing some deadly worry or fatal grouch. All the time their efficiency may be sapped by some fear or ruined by some sin. After a while, of course, even their physical fitness may succumb to this insidious foe, but not always. In the meantime, they are in far worse plight than with a headache.

Therefore it is our obvious duty to deliver ourselves to our tasks feeling mentally and spiritually fit. Not only must our eyes be clear, but our conscience as well. Not only must our heart beat regularly and strongly, but we must have a heart of love for all our fellows. Not only must our muscles be strong and our nerves steady, but our

resolution must be strong and our soul must be calm and confident.

If we do not put our spirit into our task, we contribute to it hardly enough to count. Even the sweeping of a room "as for Thy laws" makes the room "and the action fine"; while if our soul is not back of the broom, the room will look slovenly though we toil all day.

Employers, alas, cannot estimate this element of service, the all-important element. They cannot put it down in their day-books and deduct for its lack or give a bonus for its presence when they fill the weekly pay envelope. They know well enough when it is not there or when it is there. They recognize it roughly, when they dare, by discharge or promotion; but their scales are clumsy indeed compared with God's.

The Great Employer weighs the spirit. He knows perfectly just how much zest we are putting into our work. He detects our inner reluctance, the halt of the soul, the limp of the mind. His payments, of our satisfaction, of our power, of his approval, of eternal reward, are in exact proportion to our hearty purpose. When our souls are "fine and fit," our spiritual pay envelopes bulge out with fatness.

It is with reference to this Over-Employer, after all, that every wise worker will labour, rather than merely with reference to his very inadequate employer on earth. He will refer his toil to the

divine standards, which are spiritual standards. And he will find his true pay not in material money but in the only substantial and enduring salary, the coin of the bank of heaven.

XXXVIII

SPEAKING APPRECIATIVELY

"APPRECIATE" comes from two Latin words which mean to put a price on a thing, that is, to estimate its value. In the United States we have added a meaning to the word and use it as the opposite of depreciate, that is, to raise the value of a thing. Finally, we speak of appreciating a thing in the sense of expressing our regard for it.

To appreciate a person, therefore, is: (1) To estimate his value; (2) to express his value; and (3) to increase his value. Speaking appreciatively is to do any or all these things for a man by our words.

Of the three, merely estimating the value of a person is the least useful, though many seem to think it the most important. Many do not attempt the other two forms of appreciation, but think they are showing their skill and their acuteness if they weigh all their friends and acquaintances on the accurate scales of their intellects.

Now most of us know ourselves all too well. We are thoroughly familiar with our faults, and we are probably conceited regarding our good looks or our

better qualities. We can, if we choose, tell the most discerning judge many things about ourselves that he would never guess—better than he would conjecture, worse than he perceives. Most of us are sadly discouraged regarding ourselves. The last thing we want is a cold analysis of our character, a ledger balance of our entire nature.

But appreciating some one in the second sense has come to mean not expressing his value, whether good, bad, or indifferent, but bringing out the good points and making the most of them. When we speak appreciatively of a man we do not weigh his sins over against his virtues, but we seek out his virtues and hold them up to the light.

That is a beautiful and noble thing to do, and few are they that do it. Most of us are keen as a hound on the scent of a foible, a fault, or a sin. We pounce on it with glee, we display it with gloating. We have sharp words and malicious words and ghoulishly merry words in which to set it out. But how many of us keep our zest and our bright language for the good qualities of those we meet?

Every one has a good side and a bad side. The good side may be very much smaller than the bad side, but it is there. And just as a diamond, however small, is better worth finding than a mass of garbage however large, so the least excellency in a character is more eagerly to be sought than any fault or sin.

Simply by setting forth the best that is in men you can do them and all that hear you an inestimable service. It is like filling a room with flowers instead of decaying cabbages. Of course there are decaying cabbages in the world, and of course there are stupidities and errors and wickedness in the world; but when we can have the flowers, why flaunt the cabbages? When it is possible without harm to ignore the baser side of human nature, why not rejoice in the nobler side?

And if appreciative speaking in this sense is so blessed, how much more helpful is the third form of appreciation, the actual increasing of values! There is a praise that warms, and there is a praise that also educates and inspires. This constructive praise is the third form of appreciation. It not only sees the few excellencies and makes the most of them; it also sees the great possibilities, and sets us on the way toward them.

Happy is the teacher, the parent, the employer, the friend, who knows how to use this kind of appreciation! The easiest way to correct a fault is to praise the corresponding virtue on its rare appearances. If a boy often comes tardily to school, commend him with especial warmth when he comes promptly. If a workman is usually untidy, be hearty in your praise of him when he is neat. If a child is ordinarily selfish, be most cordial in recognition of any bit of unselfishness that you can

discover. Be on the keenest lookout for opportunities for such constructive appreciations.

This third form of appreciative speaking is not to be spoiled by admixture with the first form. You are not to say, "You are usually, Tom, such a wretched speller that it is a rare pleasure to read this essay in which only two words are misspelled." That would be judicial, but it would not be inspiring. The truly educative way of saying it is this: "Tom, I am delighted! This essay is almost perfect in spelling. I knew you wouldn't let the dictionary get the better of you. You'll be our champion speller yet." That is the kind of appreciation which increases values.

Don't be afraid of spoiling folks with praise. For every person whom commendation has made vainglorious there are a thousand persons whom the lack of praise has rendered sad and discouraged. Many a church is starving its pastor in the matter of grateful appreciation. Many a Sunday-school superintendent, many a Sunday-school teacher, is faint-hearted because he does not know that he has done any good; while as for unappreciated fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers and friends,—yes, and employers and employees,—their name is legion.

Praise is a most potent medicine, a most nutritious food. Alas, that we so often keep the bottle stopped, keep the cake in the closet! We are too reserved, or we are too heedless, or we are too crit-

ical. Let us become bulls and not bears in the market of folks' virtues. Let us bid up their fine qualities. Let us advertise them to others and lavish praise upon themselves. Best of all, let us rejoice in our own hearts over every good we can discover in a fellow mortal, as if it were a pearl for our own treasure-house. For it all goes into the coffers of our King.

XXXIX

THE ART OF MAKING FRIENDS

A FRIEND is one's other self, therefore no selfish person can have a friend. To a friend we reveal ourselves as to ourselves; we trust a friend as we trust ourselves; rejoice in a friend's welfare as in our own; work for a friend as we labour for our own interests. Obviously all this is impossible for a selfish man.

Yet there is much pursuit of friendship in a selfish spirit: because we want to be entertained; because we want to be comforted and helped; because we want our goods enlarged or our happiness increased. All such aims defeat themselves. As well try to catch the sunshine that you may eat it, as seek to imprison friendship in any such carnal barriers. Friendship is all for giving and not at all for receiving; for that very reason the receipts from friendship are enormous.

How, then, can we speak of the "art" of making friends? Is it not the most artless and natural thing in the world? Does not any artifice spoil it? Assuredly; and yet all nature is built on art, that is, on a plan. We rightly name God the Infinite Artist. He does nothing haphazard or carelessly. A heedless instant at the heart of the universe would send the universe back to chaos. So let us

not expect this loveliest thing that God has made, our human friendship, to be without art. We must plan for it, work it out, cherish it with a fixed and delicate purpose.

Do we think enough about our friendships? Do we design them, or leave them wholly to chance? Good things do not happen, and it is no wonder that so many lives are friendless, since they do not go out after friends. That is not the way an ordered universe produces its miracles of use and beauty. If we want a friend, we must put at least as much thought into the pursuit as into the endeavour after beefsteak.

This does not mean that we are to make a difficult thing out of friendship. Friendship is the easiest thing in the world. It need not require much time—or, it may require all the time we have. Whichever it is, it will be the natural, the inevitable way of spending our time, not the hard way. The ends of friendship may be met perfectly by a bright nod, our soul in our eyes. Just a cheery word tossed across a full sidewalk may perpetuate friendship. A scanty post-card may carry friendship across a continent. The demands of friendship need daunt no one. Friends do not count words or weigh gifts or estimate times.

But, on the other hand—and this is the real joy of friendship—it may take all our time and all our strength and all our possessions. It is only when these are surely cast into the balances of friendship

that a wisp of time or a snatch of a sentence will suffice. Friendship's bank must be full, though our checks upon it are small. It is enough to know that it is there, and at our happy disposal.

The art of friendship, then, does not lie in our face or in our hands, in anything we say or do, but in the leaning of our soul toward our friend. If we know how to love unselfishly, we have mastered the art of friendship. Not that friendship is dumb; love will find words. Not that friendship is inactive; love will compel to deeds. We have just this thing to see to, if we would know the joys of friendship, this one thing, unselfish love.

Is any one reading these words who lacks friends and yet is conscious of love? Perhaps you love others deeply—men and women and little children—but cannot count them your friends. That is possible, with a certain kind of love.

There are two Greek words for love, both of them found in the New Testament, and we have only a single word to translate them. One signifies love of the heart; the other, love of the soul. The first is the love of instinct, the second the love of reason. The first love perishes if it is not returned, the second may be all the stronger when it is not returned. The first may be called affection, the second deserves to be called friendship.

Now if you lack friendship, it may be because you have only the first kind of love. The art of friendship involves *being* a friend, but not neces-

sarily *having* a friend. Friendship can do without a friend. Christ was a friend to all men, His entire being and all His life pulsated with friendship; yet what a paltry handful of friends He had! "Ye are my friends," He said, "if ye do the things which I command you." Not many rose to that high qualification.

In short, friendship is a glorious independence. Friendship so exalts the soul with love that it possesses all things—the world, life, death, things present, things to come—because friendship allies the soul to Christ who possesses all things. Having friends is more or less accidental. It depends on time and place, on mood and fancy, on the chance of birth and breeding. But being a friend is no accident, and is wholly within one's power. Not all the whims and passions of the world can destroy the friendly attitude of a loving soul.

This is the victorious friendship of the cross. This is the sacrificial friendship which, thus lifted up, is drawing all men to itself. Let us gladly imitate it in our own lives, through the grace of the Divine Friend. Let us seek the spirit of friendship, knowing that it is its own reward. Let us plan to be friends, take time to be friends, spend thought and pains upon our friendship. And let us rejoice when we find our friendship costing us something, for then we may be entering the fellowship of the cross.

XL

KNOWING WHEN WE HAVE ARRIVED

DISCONTENT is often exalted into a virtue. There is much talk about "divine discontent." "Are you entirely satisfied with your salary of fifty dollars a week?" a famous newspaper publisher is said to have asked one of his editors. "Entirely, sir," was the answer. "I want no one on my staff who is entirely satisfied with fifty dollars a week," was the curt reply; and the story has been related with high approval. "That's the way to talk!" says the successful business man. "Contented? Only putty men are contented. A man of push never has enough."

On the other hand, the world is full of moralists who preach content with one's lot, whatever it may be. They urge a leveling doctrine. "The same sky," they insist, "arches over the rich man's park and the poor man's tiny back yard. What does a rich man get out of his millions? Only a roof over his head, clothes to wear, and three meals a day. If you have these, you are as well off as he. Why seek for more? Be content with what you have."

Both advisers may be right, and both may be lamentably wrong. There are laudable and essen-

tial ambitions, but there are also ambitions that corrode, that drag down and destroy. There is a contentment that means peace not disassociated with progress, and there is a contentment that means stagnation or retrogression. Neither contentment nor discontent is to be condemned or approved without careful qualifications.

It is the part of a wise man to be discontented enough to get a home, but contented enough to live in it after he has got it. In the World War we heard much about advances, but after every advance we heard of a pause for "the consolidation of positions." Big guns had to be brought up, railways had to be extended in order that supplies might be forwarded, trenches had to be dug, and defences erected. A campaign that planned only advances would mean defeat before it had gone halfway. A shrewd general, having made his gains, knows that his next task is to hold them.

When a cup is full, further pouring into it only spoils the tablecloth. The next thing to do with a full cup is to drink its contents. Many keep on pouring into the cup of life, endlessly pouring, never stopping to enjoy it.

This is a common experience in the matter of money-making. "When I get twenty thousand dollars, I shall have enough," says the young man. A few years later, having gained his twenty thousand dollars, he has advanced his goal to thirty thousand. "When I get that much," he says, "I'll retire."

But year after year sees his hoard increase, and his goal moved ever farther ahead. "Man never is, but always to be blest." The men who have "made their pile," and know it, are the rare exceptions.

The same is true in the matter of fame. The ambition that would be quite satisfied with a city office attains it, and instantly swells to State dimensions. The eminence that seemed to touch the skies as we looked up at it from the valley, is found, on ascending it, to be only the foothill of a much higher mountain, which, in its turn must be climbed. The ultimate peak is seldom reached.

It is good to have ambition; it is good, also, to know when that ambition has been attained. Without the latter knowledge life is one long dissatisfaction, a constant reaching after something ahead. There is no pleasure in achievement; what we have not and what we are not, forever overshadow what we have and are.

Especially is this true of those with sensitive consciences and high ideals. They are likely to condemn themselves when they have every right to congratulate themselves. They spend their days in bewailing the ideals they have not attained, altogether forgetting the ideals they have attained most successfully. They make themselves miserable all along life's journey by not realizing that they have already arrived.

It is a journey, to be sure, this life of ours. The goal of yesterday is not, must not be, the goal of

to-day. "We must onward still and upward who would keep abreast of truth." In that sense life is a series of dissatisfactions, of unattained ambition.

But this journey is one of stages, and each stage marks an achievement. Every day's end finds us at an inn, with the lights shining, the fire burning brightly, the landlord giving cheery welcome, and the table spread with a goodly meal. We have earned the right to our bed, and to a night's rest and peace. Thus we can travel on happily and quite indefinitely, while a forced journey, day and night, ever driving on without a rest, wears us out before we have half reached our destination.

No one of us has made all the friends he intends to make, but it is well for us to stop and rejoice in the friendships we have formed, and take cognizance of the fact that we have reached many of the blessed havens of friendship. None of us has done so much good work in the world as he hopes to do, but that is no reason why we should not hug to our hearts the proud assurance that we have done a lot of good work. Not a soul of us has attained all the heights of noble character that he purposes to reach, but we have climbed part way up, and we are foolish if we do not now and then look out with satisfaction over the widening prospect. We do not know so much of God as we long to know, but we shall come to live ever more intimately and blessedly with Him if now and then we pause to realize that God is growing constantly more precious

to us, and that our life is really drawing nearer to Him as the years go by.

If discontent is a stimulus, contentment is a strength, and we cannot go far without both.

Printed in the United States of America

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON, D.D.

Under Twenty

Messages to Big Boys and Girls. $1.50.

Clothed in direct and simple language, Dr. Jefferson's messages to young folk enshrine truths of the highest import, and point towards the attainment of life's highest ideals. Out of his rich treasure-house, he brings forth "things both new and old." He is an acknowledged master of clear, unmistakable presentation, which finds ample expression in this admirable series of addresses.

JOHN T. FARIS, D.D.

Men Who Conquered

$1.25

The new volume in "Making Good Series" contains many hints on how to gain real success from the lives of men of modern days, such as William E. Dodge, Jacob Riis, Charles A. Eastman, Isaac Pitman, George W. Childs, John Muir, etc.

ARTHUR E. ROBERTS

Scout Executive, Cincinnati Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Emancipation of Youth

$1.00.

Beginning with the belief that most lads come into the world possible of being directed and developed into lives of normalcy and usefulness, Mr. Roberts proceeds to discuss such aspects of his subject as: Mind-making; Heredity; Bases of Habit; Periods of Growth; the Attitude and Influence of the Church, the School and the Home of the Boy; Adolescence and Leisure. James E. West, Chief Scout Executive (N. Y.), says: "I am quite enthusiastic over it. It is thoroughly sound —decidedly worth while."

HOWARD BEMENT *Professor of English, The Hill School.*

Old Man Dare's Talks to College Men

75c.

"Old Man Dare" is not an elderly person. The qualifying adjective betokens, not age but affection and respect felt for him by a number of College classmen to whom he gave a series of simple, unaffected talks such as may be held as likely to stimulate a lively sense of fair play, promote honorable dealing, develop character and a corresponding revulsion for mean, shabby conduct which falls below the standard of a man. These sane, straight talks of "Old Man Dare" form the contents of this present volume.

JOHN HENRY JOWETT, D.D.

God Our Contemporary

A Series of Complete Addresses $1.50.

Among the pulpit-giants of to-day Dr. Jowett has been given a high place. Every preacher will want at once this latest product of his fertile mind. It consists of a series of full length sermons which are intended to show that only in God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ can we find the resources to meet the needs of human life.

SIDNEY BERRY, M.A.

Revealing Light $1.50.

A volume of addresses by the successor to Dr. Jowett at Carr's Lane Church, Birmingham, the underlying aim of which is to show what the Christian revelation means in relation to the great historic facts of the Faith and the response which those facts must awaken in the hearts of men to-day. Every address is an example of the best preaching of this famous "preacher to young men."

FREDERICK C. SPURR

Last Minister of Regent's Park Chapel, London.

The Master Key

A Study in World-Problems $1.35.

A fearless, clearly-reasoned restatement of the terms of the Christian Gospel and its relation to the travail through which the world is passing. Mr. Spurr is a man in the vanguard of religious thought, yet just as emphatically as any thinker of the old school, he insists on one Physician able to heal the wounds and woes of humanity.

RUSSELL H. CONWELL, D.D.

Pastor Baptist Temple, Philadelphia.

Unused Powers $1.25.

To "Acres of Diamonds," "The Angel's Lily," "Why Lincoln Laughed," "How to Live the Christ Life," and many other stirring volumes, Dr. Conwell has just added another made up of some of his choicest addresses. Dr. Conwell speaks, as he has always spoken, out of the experimental knowledge and practical wisdom of a man, who having long faced the stark realities of life, has been exalted thereby.

GAIUS GLENN ATKINS, D.D.

Minister of the First Congregational Church, Detroit, Michigan.

The Undiscovered Country $1.50.

A group of addresses marked by distinction of style and originality of approach. The title discourse furnishes a central theme to which those following stand in relation. Dr. Atkins' work, throughout, is marked by clarity of presentation, polished diction and forceful phrasing.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

2W1.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 043 809 7