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SOME ESTIMATES OF LIFE

by J. B. Chapman

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BY

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1 The Kingdom of God Is Within You

Chapter 2 The Law of Sacrifice

Chapter 3 Man's Cry for the Supernatural

Chapter 4 The Undesigned Calf

Chapter 5 The Law of Life

Chapter 6 Life's Purpose and End

CHAPTER 1

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

THE infant man seems to have an instinctive sense of insufficiency and incompleteness. He holds fast to any support upon which his hands chance to fall and gives the clearest evidence that he is moved by the sense of his own helplessness. And, indeed, how very dependent he is! How little he knows! His body is naked and his mind is blank, his hands are empty and his moral senses are dormant.

But the infant man is possessed of an “acquiring tendency.” He reaches out to things outside of himself. And there are very few worth while things that come to him of their own volition; he must “fight if he would win” even in the battle of existence itself.

The infant man recognizes that he is a born king. He feels within his soul the creature’s answer to the Creator’s commandment to “subdue the earth and rule over it.”

The material world is the first territory demanding conquest with which the infant man comes in contact, and here, also, is the basis for his first great temptation the temptation to be chiefly concerned with the things of the time and sense world. Every one must spend a great deal of his total time upon this earth in looking after the material needs. One third of our life is spent in sleep. Another third is Spent in honest toil, if we really merit material existence. Then a considerable portion of the remaining third must be Spent in eating, in dressing and in recreation.

It is said that a proud young lieutenant in the regular army spent the night with an old mountaineer in West Virginia. In the morning, the soldier arose, washed his face and hands, shaved himself and washed his teeth. The old mountaineer watched all this with increasing curiosity; and when the officer began to polish his shoes, the host could stand it no longer. “Young man,” he inquired sympathetically, “are you this much trouble to yourself

every day?" We are all a great deal of trouble to ourselves, even with the simplest life that we can live.

His relationship to the world of material possessions has always constituted one of man's greatest problems. Wealth has been seen to purchase many things that men need, so the rich man has been called "independent," and the child-man who inquires the way to the domains of his unconquered empire is usually directed to the counting house and to the marts of trade. But either experience or observation teaches us all that servants of Mammon are debased slaves, and that in possessing the world of wealth men are possessed by the heartless God Mammon.

Earthly glory is another domain that is offered to the adventurer who has entered the ranks of mundane combatants. Power to make men obey and ability to cause men to bestow honor, are alike fascinating to the misdirected. The great military heroes, even the best and the worst of them, were not primarily thirsty for blood. Blood was incidental; their great moving cause was a passion for conquest.

Fleshly pleasure is another field that entices the "Wandering Ulysses." "The lust of the world, the lust of flesh and the pride of life" are sisters in the trio of formidable "flappers" who would become substitutes for man's higher fields of conquest.

But we can not blame the man for being what the Creator made him; and naturally man covets riches, desires kingship, pines for glory and demands a satisfaction that nature did not give him: therefore these instincts, tendencies and cravings are not evil within themselves. It is only when they are biased by inward depravity and encouraged by outer misdirection that they result in the monstrosities that are worthy of no defense.

And human regulation can not be trusted to correct evils which grow out of natural and universal endowments. Peace conferences and disarmament meetings may do good by encouraging men to think and reason, rather than to feel and fight; but men are fighters constitutionally, and legislation can not change human nature. The ancients had no modern armaments, but they killed more people, proportionally, in their wars than we kill in ours today.

Legislation may serve to curb the present impositions of the rich, but can not destroy the desire for accumulation. Materialistic socialism will never be successful or satisfactory. The reason is that man is conscious of his dependence, and he is convinced that this dependence will grow with the increase of his years, therefore, his heart is set on acquisitions.

Prohibition of the liquor traffic is useful in removing temptation; punishment of drug vendors is a means for saving many; and the censorship of motion pictures is demanded by the very laws of common decency; but man is set for pleasure, he will find some way to meet the cravings of his heart and mind. An actual demand can not be met by a negation.

Jesus Christ was a prohibitionist. He said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"; "Beware Of covetousness"; "Labor not for the meat that perisheth"; "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven"; and "Woe unto you that are rich." But He did not leave His commandments in the negative form. He said, "Labor for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." And he talked to His people about the "true riches." He announced to them that the "Kingdom of God cometh not with outward show"; but He did not stop until He had said, "The kingdom of God is within you."

Man must and should possess, but his acquisitions, must be "true riches," which are meted in the measure of his own spiritual accomplishments, and not the sordid gold and chattels of the material life. Man must conquer and rule, but his own heart and life constitute the true domains of his kingdom. Man should, nay he must have pleasure, but the peace that pardon brings, and the joy of a worth while life and service are the pleasures that he will find truly satisfying.

It is a mistake for a man to think of, and reach for conquests that are afar, and for riches that are not really a part of himself. Even the secular moralists say, "Half the music is in the ear of the listener, half the beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and half the goodness is in the heart." The most classical music is but a jumble of conflicting sounds to the untutored ear, the finest painting is but cheap canvas and daubs of color to the inartistic eye, the beauty of the landscape and the gorgeousness of the sunset are lost upon the soul in which the poetic instinct is dead. The

grandeur of the mountains, and the splendor of the wild flowers are nothing to the worldling who thinks only of deeds and chattels. The plastic arts have no meaning to the man who estimates treasures by the yard and pound. Friendship and love are but myths to the sordid profligate and to the mechanical intellectual. But “Unto the pure all things are pure.”

Solomon declared that a man who rules his own spirit is better than the one who takes a city. That is, the conquest of one’s own mind and passions and heart is a greater victory than to overcome everything that outside of one’s self. Alexander conquered the world without and made all kings pay him tribute and acknowledge his authority; but he failed to overcome the world within, and died from the effects of liquor and debauchery. His passion for conquest might have been spent on the world within and he could have been another Socrates or, with divine illumination, another Paul. If he had sought God with the indomitable will with which he sought worldly glory, what a conqueror he might have been! if he had been as thirsty for the “new wine of the Kingdom” as he was for the liquors of Babylon, what an Apostle of Pentecost he would have been! Julius Caesar read the story of Alexander and shamed himself by saying, “Why, he died before he was as old as I am, and yet I have scarcely made a beginning.” He picked out one of the meanest towns in Gaul and said he would rather be the first man in that town than to be the second man in Rome. How he would have gone from “glory to glory” if his passion had only been directed toward the conquest of the Christian’s Canaan! Ulysses S. Grant was the hero of many a campaign, but when he was old and dying of cancer he acknowledged that he had never had the courage to come out definitely for Christ, as he had felt all along that he should have done.

Money is valuable only in terms of what it will buy. The miser stood guard over his gold until he starved to death. Most people want money because it will purchase what they want, and will, therefore, promote their independence. But the average man’s desires keep the same proportionate distance ahead of his ability all through his life. He is as near contented when his income is five hundred dollars per year as he is when it has grown to five thousand; for the things that would have delighted him at first no longer satisfy him at all. If this difficulty is really overcome by the

actual super-abundance of wealth, then, right away, the man wants something that money will not buy at all. Ahab pouted and wished to die because Naboth allowed a moral cause to keep him from selling his vineyard for money.

Still, we would not kill out man's desire for possessions: for this would make the man worthless and still would not make him happy. Diogenes, the wise old Greek, observed that "A man's happiness is not promoted by the increase of his income, but by the decrease of his wants." And he set in to reduce his wants. He moved from his house into a tub to get rid of the trouble of having to care for the house; he threw away his dishes to save the trouble of washing them. At last he had only a cup for drinking, and a spoon for eating. Then he saw a boy drink out of his hand and eat with his fingers and he threw away his cup and spoon. Alexander visited him as he sat in his tub and asked what he could do for him. The only request that Diogenes would make of the world conqueror was that he would stand aside out of his sunlight. Diogenes has been offered as an example of poverty without indigence. Others sought independence by possessing wealth, he sought the same goal in the opposite direction; he would be independent of wealth by ceasing to need what it would buy. But he could not stop with material things. The same indolence which he exercised toward the possession of wealth was manifested toward learning and religion; so that in the end his philosophy led back to the Buddhaistic notion of cessation as a means of happiness and rest. The practical results were seen in the slothfulness and uselessness of those who tried to follow him. No, man must retain his passion for possessions and have it directed toward things that are holy and true.

Jesus said of Himself, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." No one can think of Jesus as wishing for riches, yet no one can think of His followers becoming indolent and filled with low, selfish ease. "My Father worketh, hitherto, and I work." "I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day, I shall be perfected." "And he arose a great while before day and went out into a mountain to pray." "And being weary with the journey, he sat upon the well." "He found no leisure, even so much as to eat." These are the sayings and doings of Jesus. He was not poor in order that He might not

bear the responsibility; He was poor that He might be free to give His life to higher interests than the riches of this world.

Following on after Christ, Paul said, "Labor not to be rich;" and, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Still he urged that "Our people profess honest trades that they may have to give to them that have need." He exhorted, "Be not slothful in business." He testified, "I have labored more abundantly than they all." At the close of his life he witnessed "I have 'ought a good fight." He commanded his preachers to "Be instant in season and out of season." There is every indication that Paul would not allow any seeker after earthly gold to be more zealous in the pursuit of his object than he himself would be in his quest for the "gold that is tried in the fire." The happiest man is, indeed, the man who needs the least of this world; provided he needs it not, because he possesses something so much better. Diogenes was poor within as well as poor without, but while the follower of Jesus Christ may be poor without, he is never poor within.

Health is a great personal possession a fortune within itself. And any one who has even a small legacy to begin with can be conqueror of physical handicaps. It is said that the father of Theodore Roosevelt provided a private gymnasium for the delicate lad and said "Your mind is all right, but you will have to build you a body." The lad looked at the apparatus designed to be used for physical development, set his jaw in determination and said, "All right, I will build a body." How well he succeeded is indicated by the amount of work that he turned off in a rather short life-time. But physical health and strength is not the only need it is not even the principal requirement; for the men, and races of men, who possess the greatest physical perfection are commonly the least sufficient within themselves.

The intellect presents another great empire waiting to be subdued and ruled over. The capabilities and capacities of the mind of man are wonderful indeed; and the educated man has the advantage always. Laying aside earning capacity, which is the usual consideration when education is being mentioned, a man with a trained mind gets a great deal more out of life than he would get with an untutored intellect. It is only the educated man who finds, "Books in running brooks and sermons in stones." The

astronomer possesses the heavens in a much more real sense than the untaught observer of the stars. The botanist sees in the structure of the humble nettle beauty that is hidden to the eyes of the barbarian. But the intellect is not all it is not even the principal thing. Those who, like Plato, have held that speculation is the highest occupation of man, have come to a sad and unsatisfying end. Darwin, in his old age, bewailed the fact that he had become a mere machine for discovering facts and classifying them for the convenience of other men. He declared that his own life was empty and unsatisfactory. He complained that he had lost his love for music, poetry and the plastic arts, and that love and all pleasant sentiments had no place in his life.

The heart must be included in the domain of personal empire, or all else is vain and incomplete. A sound heart is the center around which all the facts of the good life are mustered. Jesus always arranged the setting in this way. Evil thoughts, and all the things that defile the man, He said, came out of the heart that is, out of the affections. He commended care in tithing the mint, anise and cummin, minor details, but especially commanded attention to goodness and judgment and the weightier matters of the law. He allowed for the profit in keeping the commandments from one's youth up, but uncovered the heart sin of avariciousness as the hidden bar in the harbor entrance into the Kingdom. The cleansing of the outside of the cup and of the platter, He counted secondary to inward holiness. And, while He always rejoiced in human accomplishments, He emphasized the indispensability of the bestowals of Divine grace. He accepted the gratitude of the Samaritan leper, but told the human profession of full fidelity on the part of unsanctified Peter but received the true confession of the dying thief. The stately courtesy of Simon the Pharisee meant less to Him than the tears of the penitent woman from the streets. He never envied the rich or wise or great but rejoiced that the Father made known His principal secrets to believing babes. He taught His disciples to give rather than to get; He denied any position as a divider of worldly heritages but promised that the meek should inherit the earth which others were striving so hard to acquire. Though His true followers were to turn the other cheek to the smiter give the inner garment to the one pressing his legal claim for the outer one, and go the second mile with the representative of the emperor who could legally compel him to go only

one; yet He forbade self-pity, and comforted His disciples with the words, "Fear not, little flock for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" for which others are compelled to fight. The Christ life is the best life.

The biography, or autobiography of a man usually gives just the outside facts concerning his life: the place and date of his birth, the extent of his academic training and the things he did, or tried to do. But this is no more the actual story of a man's life than a rehearsal of its wars is a history of the American nation. There is a little of a man's life that may be called his public life, there is a little that may be called his social and domestic life; but by far the greatest part of every life must be lived within the walls of one's own mind and heart. In public, social and domestic life a man may be able to get others to do his way, he may find it possible to do as others desire, or he may find a compromise where both he and the others give some ground and keep some. But a man is himself, the greatest factor in his own happiness or disappointment; for he must take himself as he is.

Some time ago I read what might be called the "spiritual biography" of Mark Twain. Of course, there was more or less of the "physical" biography in it, but it was the inside life's story that startled me. Mark Twain was the son of an ambitious mother who was married to a man she did not love, and Mark himself was an unwelcome child. He came into the world with prenatal impressions of inferiority and unwelcomeness. How strong his mother's feelings were may be gathered from a conversation between herself and her son, after he had become famous as a writer. She said, "Mark, you were a delicate child and you gave me more anxiety than any of my other children." Becoming interested, the famous son asked, "Why, were you afraid I would die?" "No," replied the mother, "I was afraid you would not die." Though spoken in something of a light vein at the time, it, nevertheless represented the feelings which affected the domestic atmosphere in which Mark Twain grew up. Along with this, the mother was something of a puritan and impressed the demands of duty and the call for righteousness strongly upon the mind and conscience of the child. As a result the child was tossed between the billows of conscious debasement and the roaring breakers of lawful restraint. He learned to despise himself, and then he interpreted others by his own feelings and despised them. He was so miserable because of his self-hatred

that he frequently considered suicide; but when the test came he did not have the courage to take his own life, and then he despised himself doubly for being a coward. He despised others because he thought they were like himself, but because he could not and would not correct himself, he did not attempt to correct others. He was not good enough to be a reformer, he was not hateful enough to be a satirist, so he compromised on humor; but he did not laugh at his own humor. He used to say there will be no humor in heaven. He hated whatever he was and despised whatever he did. He wrote and lectured to make a living, but he thought writing and lecturing were the meanest, least-satisfying endeavors to which one could possibly give his time. We have been amused by Mark Twain's humor, but his was the hollowest, darkest, hardest, most desolate, most unsatisfactory life that he himself knew. He pictured his own misery in the waifs, wharf rats and blunderers of his fiction. To himself, he was grotesque, deformed and absurd. All his successes were mere conquests of the outward world: he remained a prisoner in the presence of liberty; he starved in the midst of plenty; he was blind, though in a garden of beauty; he was a deaf man in a music hall; an illiterate man in a library of books; a sick man at a feast; an unclothed guest at a wedding; a sinner in heaven.

A man is happiest who needs the least, provided his satiety is real and not imaginary. An atrophied appetite is ghastly, but desire that is properly and legitimately met is the fulfillment of one of the principal beatitudes. Rich and worldly, powerful Pharisees inquired for the kingdom that cometh with outward show, and died amidst the tyranny of Roman sway. Humble followers of "The way" rejoiced in a liberty that stripes and dungeons could not destroy. With the King the crowned head of the empire of heart and life, there is peace amidst turmoil, glory amidst shame, freedom in bonds, riches in poverty, comfort in bereavement, joy in persecution, friendship in isolation, and life in death.

We will never be able to change our circumstances very much, but God can make us victors over our circumstances. Prayer often changes us more than it changes the source of our trials. Grace to be sick is sometimes a greater blessing than faith for healing. When the wine runs short at the marriage, then Christ works a miracle. It is easy for one to charge up his failures to his friends and associates, but the test of one's real worth is his ability to "make good," not his aptness in making excuses.

Manhood is better than money, character is of greater account than reputation, and personal success is better than written credentials. Your real triumphs are the victories of your own soul. The grace of God that is within you is the only grace of which you have a right to boast. His ability to do “exceeding abundantly, above all we ask or think” is measured by “the power which worketh within us.” It is not a very deep religion that sings exclusively of the future millennial when contests are all past, or of heaven where no temptations and sorrows can come. It is a better religion that can testify to the present incarnation of Christ within your own body and of a faith that overcometh the world. The boat can ride triumphant on the water so long as it keeps all the water on the outside; and the Christian is proof against the world without so long as he is clean from the world within. Every reformation, every organization that has the human element in it in fact, every thing that “cometh with observation” will be more or less disappointing; but that heart kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, depending upon no material substance or fickle creature outside of yourself, should be your everlasting inheritance in the Everlasting Father.

I would estimate your possessions, not by the size of your tax receipts, not by the breadth of your fertile acreage, not by the location of your city blocks, not by the fullness of your bank deposits, not by the texture of the coat you wear, not even by the rank of social clan to which you belong, but by the grace of your spirit and the measure of your mind; for “the kingdom of God is within you.”

CHAPTER 2

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

“What Doth It Profit to Be Baptized for the Dead?”

CHANGE requires sacrifice, whether that change is for the better or for the worse. No one can both “eat his cake and still have it.” If one presses forward to things which are ahead, he must “forget the things which are behind.” We must leave the wilderness to get into Canaan, and there were some good things in the wilderness. The tabernacle perished when the temple was built, and the tabernacle had some value. Rachel died when Benjamin was born, and life is sustained by death. The joys and pleasures of childhood will not abide the wisdom of age.

But we can not escape change we can not stand still. Decay sets in where growth leaves off. Atrophy is the price of inactivity. Today is the tomorrow we desired, or feared yesterday. There is not an ounce of the body left that we had seven years ago. And spirit is as restless as flesh. “When I was a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” But there was a sacrifice in this putting away. No man’s wife can make as good bread as his “mother used to make”; because the husband lacks the keenness of relish that the boy used to have. The freshness and wonder of the child has given away to the maturity and logic of the man. Youth sees visions, while age can only dream dreams. It is the gift of experience and conquest which enables one to dream dreams, but there is sacrifice in the loss of the ability to span the chasms and bridge the mighty deep by the visions of youth.

And a man can not do every thing. I remember the strange feeling that came over me when a stripling youth ran past me in the course. Once I held the distinction of being fast on foot, but when I became able to carry a heavier load, I could not run so fast. But I had to sacrifice to get to where I could class as a lifter of heavy loads. My little son challenged me with the words, “I can do something that you can not do.” I was not ready to give up until he offered to “crawl through a smaller crack in the fence.”

Then there are limitations within the sphere of one's capabilities. I tried (just one year) to operate a farm as a side line to serving as the president of a college and preaching in the summer campmeetings. I still think I might operate a farm, but I am sure I can not do it without sacrificing some other tasks which I hope to accomplish. According to the law of physics a material body can not occupy two distinct positions at the same time, any more than two material bodies can occupy the same space at the same time. A man may have a vocation and an avocation, but he will not excel in two vocations at once. "The jack of all trades is usually good at none."

But a man can not do all that he would really love to do, so there is sacrifice in surrendering the privilege of doing many right and good things which he can not do because of the demands that are upon him.

A young man usually has a set goal that he feels he can afford to use every means for reaching; and he feels that he will be satisfied if he can only reach this goal. But as time goes on a man loses much of the distinctness of his ideal and flounders more or less amidst uncertainties. He wants "to eat his cake and still have it." Just as he gets ready to eat his cake, the desire to still have it restrains him. Then when he was about decided to keep his cake, his desire to eat it unsettles him. So he flounders between the mistakes of the spendthrift and those of the miser. Most people lose the first good factor in success by failing to get started in time. I do not know where the adage "a poor beginning makes a good ending" originated but, anyway, it is false. The man who starts in time has scored a good point.

Since sacrifice must be made, a man must decide the basis upon which he will make his choice of the things that he will sacrifice. Most values may be distinguished as quality values or quantity values. That is, there are some things that are of so much higher grade than others that a small bit of the former outweighs an unlimited amount of the latter. For instance money is a good thing, and any one would do a legitimate thing for pay. But suppose you should be offered a million dollars for your good name, would you sell? Would you tell a falsehood or commit a felony for the millions of Rockefeller? If you would you would have a false notion of values. A man's honor is beyond earthly values.

Then quantity properly enters into some considerations. That is, a thing might be a good thing for today that will be a great detriment when a

decade is considered. Alcohol speeds up the heart and makes one “more alive” for the instant; but in the end, the loss is irreparable. A man may rush out to his life’s work without proper preparation and do much more the first year than he would be able to do if he spent the time in preparation; but at the end of the decade, the prepared workman will be in the lead and by the end of a quarter of a century the prepared man will likely be the only one left in the race. Often I have seen young men quit going to school to accept a job out of consideration for the money that he would receive the first year! And I have seen young preachers rush out with a smattering of learning to accept the pastorate of a church, or to enter the evangelistic work on the plea that “time is too short” for him to spend any more of it in preparation. And I have seen that young man “come to himself” later to find out that he was lured by a glitter that was not produced by real yellow gold. A dollar today is not always worth the sacrifice that it requires when the earning power of a lifetime is compared with it. Souls were dying all the years of His minority, yet Jesus waited patiently until He was qualified for the task of preaching salvation to men; and surely no one will question but that the three years, after He was really prepared, were really sufficient.

In the days of the Apostle Paul and the church at Corinth, martyrdom was so commonly the price of professing Christianity, that baptism, the sign of the Christian profession, came, also, to be considered the mark of death. There were not many hypocrites in those days; it cost too much to become even a professor of Christianity. But the Apostle reasoned on the resurrection, and concluded that the Christian profession and its very probable consequence, martyrdom, were justified on the ground of the promise and certainty of life beyond death. He said, in substance, that it was all right to sacrifice the present mortal life in the interest of the future immortal life. His theory was that one should sacrifice the lower plane of life for the higher. To “eat, drink, and be merry” is the philosophy of the man to whom today is all. Since the dead are to be resurrected, the matter of a few more or a few less days on this side of the resurrection is not a serious consideration.

Jesus also, said, “He that loseth his life shall save it, and he that preserveth his life shall lose it.” That is, he that sacrifices his eternal interests upon the altar of time is giving eternal happiness for a day of

pleasure; while he that sacrifices a present pleasure in the interest of the kingdom of God will find his pleasure in the land unmarred by sorrow and decay.

Most of our sacrifices are relative rather than absolute; seeming rather than real. We look now upon the baby girl weeping over her dolly's broken head and say, "Never mind, Little One, you will have real sorrow some day." We fret at the boy for becoming upset over the loss of a kite string, and warn him that losses that are much weightier are likely to befall him when he reaches the estate of manhood. But childhood sorrows and losses are as real as any others in this world; they are all just relative. Grown-ups swerve from duty to please their kin folks, waver because of the failure of the bank, draw back from the will of God because sordid worldlings misunderstand and malign them. But sometime we will look back upon these little losses and these light crosses and wonder that they ever were noticed at all.

After all, the principle of being "baptized for the dead" because of the hope of a better resurrection is applicable to all the stages and phases in life. We must sacrifice something, so let the sacrifice always be on the lower plane. A certain food is pleasant to my palate, but detrimental to my health; I will sacrifice the pleasure of my palate for the good of my health. A certain practice is an asset to my social standing, but is hurtful to my influence as a Christian; I will give the higher plane my preference. When the interests of body and mind conflict, I will vote for the intellect; when the intellect and the heart make counter demands, I will heed the clamors of my soul; when the laws of man and the laws of God are at variance, I will immediately make my choice to "obey God rather than man."

The saints of all the ages have been clear in this matter of choosing the plane upon which they will sacrifice. Joseph left his coat in Potiphar's house, along with pleasure and promotion, and fled to prison in order to preserve his virtue. Moses "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is

invisible.” Abraham left his home in Ur of the Chaldees and lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob because he sought a city to come. The three Hebrew children did not ask for a second trial, but assured the king at once that they would not forsake the true God, whether He preserved them or let them perish. Job would not give up his integrity, even when every present proof of its profit had disappeared.

Physical suffering is better than spiritual condemnation. Sickness is preferable to sin. Social ostracism is a prize to be sought as compared with estrangement from God. Ignorance is less dark than moral evil. Political tyranny is but a dim type of soul oppression. Physical slavery is less bitter than the vassalage of Satan. Imprisonment in the dungeon of the persecutor is liberty as compared with enmeshment in the thralldom of the Devil. Death is glory when damnation is its alternative. In every case when the sacrifice lies between the members of any of these couplets, being “baptized for the dead,” means choosing the latter member.

But everything is not “white or black” some things are gray. And choice between the best and the worst constitutes one of the smallest exercises of the volitional powers. We must come on up to a closer discrimination and choose between the good of life: we must go always in the quest of the best. Entirely within the scope of the Christian’s sphere, Paul said, “I am in a strait betwixt two.” A useful course in apostolic ministration was one alternative, home and rest in heaven were the other. The apostle started away back; he said, personally, I would prefer heaven, but further life would be more useful; so, I choose to abide. He followed his same principle of being “baptized for the dead” in that he buried the present pleasure for the sake of the future and permanent prize. It often occurs that there are two or more courses, each of which is legitimate, and, within itself right; but we can not run them all. In such a case we must elect to go the one which involves the highest motive; following this rule, we will never go wrong. If it is a matter of my own pleasure or my neighbor’s profit, I must take the way of my neighbor’s profit. If it is my own honor or God’s glory, I must take the way of God’s glory. If it is a choice between temporal gain and eternal riches, I must elect the way that leads to eternal riches. If the alternates are temporal service or the saving of souls, I must prefer the higher service.

To our puerile minds, the best always seems to be the most difficult. We sometimes feel that we are called upon to take the way that is absolutely not best for us we imagine that our sacrifices are real. We think we are called upon to give up possessions without a cause and without just and equitable compensation. We attempt to believe that we are driven to do some things for no reason only just because they are difficult: or, which is just as bad, we fear that the good has been made difficult just to tempt us to leave it alone. We mourn over the loss of the things we sacrificed in order to gain the higher levels as though the loss of them were a real disaster. Even though we gain the gates of life, we still bewail the eye we plucked out and the hand and foot we cut off in order to pass the portal of the haven we desired. But no one will come into the better life without cutting off the members which held him to the old existence “Ye can not serve God and Mammon.” No one will have part in the resurrection “out from among the dead” unless he has chosen to be baptized into the loss of all things that disqualify for it.

Entrance into higher planes of life require sacrifice of some things on the lower planes just as devotion to the lower demands relinquishment to one’s claim on the higher. A youth must decide whether he will take immediate money-making, pleasure for pleasure’s sake, leisure and a general good time or whether he will devote his attention to books, study and hard work in order that he may secure an education. In the former list, I do not intend to include dishonest money-getting nor sinful pleasure, the choice is within the scope of what is right, and is only a matter of taking the best. If he chooses the higher plane, he will likely pay the price in the currency of the lower sphere.

I do not know whether God has a first, and second, and even a third choice for His children or not. Sometimes it seems that He has. Moses might have been God’s sole representative at the court of Pharaoh, but he pleaded his lack of eloquence, and had to divide the glory with Aaron. Joash might have smitten Syria until he had utterly consumed it, if he had been desperate enough. But he smote the ground with the prophetic arrows but thrice and thus limited his victories to that number (²2 Kings 13:18,19). Though Moses was denied entrance into the promised land because of the outbreak of pride in the smiting of the rock, yet God did not altogether reject him. David found mercy with God, but his sins brought death to his

child, plague upon Israel and rebellion against his throne. Apparently, one can be reduced to the ranks in the army of the Lord without being given a dishonorable discharge. Of course, no one can be saved during rebellion against the will of God, and the rejection of “God’s first choice” is frequently the rejection of everlasting life. Still, it is bad enough for one to be restricted to a second choice because of having rejected the first.

One of the saddest sights to me, is that of a man trying to gather up the tangled and broken threads of his life when it is all but too late. In youth he chose the lower plane and wasted his fortune of opportunity in riotous living. In maturity he entered school only to find that the brain cells which were so clear of obstructions in youth are now clogged and all but sealed. He struggles to gain the place which God offered him once, but he finds that he can not qualify youth is the time for education. I have seen the man who was called to preach the gospel, linger with the fisherman’s nets, at the receipt of customs, in the counting house, or on the farm until he had only time enough left to attain to the rank and dignity of sergeant when he should have been a general. Called to the glorious work of the foreign missionary, many have accepted an easier berth, only to spend life, devoted though it may be, in the restlessness to which “might-have-beens” are always heir. We all would like the highest and best things, if we could have the others also. None of us would miss that better resurrection if it were not that it requires the surrender of the present ease and pleasure in order that it may be secured. It is the price that holds us back.

But the dead shall rise again. In the broader application, we say, every surrender on the lower plane is justifiable. David said, “A day in thy court is better than a thousand” outside. One day of the life that is just what it ought to be is worth a thousand days on the lower plane! A year equal to a Millennium! Oh how easy it is to get ahead when, like Mary, we have “chosen the better part.” There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel’s sake, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.” To choose Christ means, in the practical things of life, to always choose the highest possible good. It means to deny yourself in fleshly appetites, earthly desires, and worldly ambitions. Yet, it means that Christ has reserved His

choicest and best for the one who sets his hope all together upon Him. It means the actual discovery of the secret which the ancient alchemists sought of turning baser substances into gold; for it means to take the things which had no more than a paltry earthly value and turn them into units of wealth that will endure when the rust has destroyed the iron of Carnegie, and canker has eaten the gold of the Morgans, and the moth has consumed the purple of kings. How foolish of us not to exchange the fading beauty of a worldly career for the glory of the life that endureth forever! How foolish for us to be fascinated by the varied colors of a life that is no more enduring than that of the moth, when there is open to us an entrance into the indescribable splendors of the life that is free from death!

CHAPTER 3

MAN'S CRY FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

“I beseech thee, shew me thy glory” (~~Exodus 33:18~~ Exodus 33:18).

FOR a brief space now and then the world has become so immersed in materialism that the majority of men have seemed contented to live the life of the beast, ending in oblivion. But with these few, brief exceptions, which have, by no means, included all the men who have lived during their day, the world of men has cried out for something which is instinctively felt to be beyond the veil of the time and sense world.

The objects and expressions of primitive and barbarian worship are often ludicrous, mysterious and disgusting; but down in the sources of the worshipping tendencies in the hearts of all, there is a pathetic cry that can not be stilled.

Calvin and others of his day believed that all religions except Judaism and Christianity, were born of the Devil. But a more intimate inquiry has convinced men of later times, that even the heathen are “feeling after God, if perchance they may find Him.” They are in the dark and make but little success of their search; but their religion is a crude and distorted expression of the call for the supernatural that the true God planted within their breasts.

Amidst all the polytheism and religious wretchedness of their times, the most sincere among the Greeks and Romans used to prophesy of a time when the chief among the gods would come and walk among mortals. While all the factors of the national religion were still functioning and the glory of the earthly house was still shining, Isaiah, among the Hebrews, told of the “Child born and the Son given.”

The magi of the far east, as well as the seers at Jerusalem, were eager at the sight of the strange “Star of Bethlehem,” and welcomed the answer to their longing for the manifestation of God to men.

The religions of the ancient world had failed, and the long delay of the hope of Israel had caused the hearts of many of the faithful to grow sick, but when the apostles went out to proclaim Christ crucified and risen again, the answers of their opposers were faint. The heads of men objected, but their hearts hoped that the story was true. The boldness of assurance gave unusual power to the testimonies of believers on Christ, and others could not “resist the power and wisdom with which they spoke.”

Lack of proper enlightenment during the past centuries of the Christian era has given rise to many crude interpretations and superstitious practices. But through all the rubbish of burning candles, counting beads, wearing robes, marching on crusades, telling of strange visions, and going on long pilgrimages there was a strong faith in the supernatural, and a pathetic call for its revelation. Foolish men tried to assist God by telling strange stories of the power revealed in relics and of the revelation of God’s will through ordeals, oracles, charms and dreams.

During the last century there was a shifting toward the deifying of the intellect. The arrogance of modern “headiness” stilled the cry of many a heart and soul that was hungry for God. The intellect had triumphed in so many things that many scrupled not to call it supreme, and the very audacity of their assumptions won many an argument for worshipers of the God of mind.

But right out of the midst of this elegant,, modern idolatry, and following on after it, as I believe and hope, there have come and are coming new expressions of the old craving for assistance from the miraculous. The unusual growth of spiritism since the outbreak of the war has given rise to many expressions of fear lest it should become the substitute for true Christianity. Though weird and disorderly, spiritism is no worse than materialism or intellectualism. Whether God or the Devil is the author, there are some things in spiritism that can not be explained by the “rules,” and this is what makes it so satisfying to many who have for a long time been laboring to believe that there is no realm beyond nature.

Within the circle of orthodox Protestantism there has been a long standing tendency to drift away from the miraculous in every way. Conversion in many places means no more than a change of mind. Or at most, it is

interpreted as an intellectual matter to be proved by the practice of Christian morality. Demonstration of religious feeling has been frowned upon, and worship has become ritualistic. The purifying of the heart by faith and the endowment of power by the incoming of the Holy Ghost, if preached at all, are so compromised that no one thinks of receiving a definite witness from God to the reception of such realities. While this situation has laid the foundation for the progress of spiritism, it has also, become the occasion of turning many to seek God with greater earnestness. If the common people accept a religion that is all head and no heart, they do so sadly and reluctantly; for their hearts crave to know Him.

The church's failure to preach the Scriptural teaching regarding the power and willingness of God to heal the body in answer to the prayer of faith has opened the door for Christian Science and other substitutes for the real.

Empty denunciation of "speaking in unknown tongues" and other phenomena which approach "the border land of the supernatural" will not accomplish much good. To deny a hungry man his barley loaf without offering him anything better is really cruelty.

But God still lives and reveals Himself to men. This dispensation is glorious because of the fulfillment of the Savior's promise of a closer proximity to God than had ever been known before. In the old days God was before, above, behind, beneath and around His people, but the new promise was that He would be in them. In the old days, he visited with Abraham beneath the oak at Mamre, but in the new day He promised to abide with His people forever. In the old days God revealed Himself in dreams, physical deliverances and in the body of His Son; manifestations which must reach the real man through the medium of his senses, but in the new time, He makes Himself known by His Spirit directly to man's Spirit. In the old time He showed His glory to the High Priest once a year when the priest went into the presence of the holy shekinah behind the veil, but the veil was rent through Christ, and now the way into the holiest is made manifest to all.

A Unitarian's Christ will not meet the world's heart cry. No matter how faultless the philosophy, no matter how sound the polity, no matter how

noted the philanthropy, no matter how inviting the application of sociology, no system of religion is going to fill the bill that does not teach men how to apprehend God experimentally. The words of George Matherson are applicable to more people than we perhaps realize: "My heart needs Thee, O Lord; my heart needs Thee! No part of my being needs Thee like my heart. All else within me can be fulfilled by Thy gifts. My hunger can be satisfied by daily bread. My thirst can be allayed by earthly waters. My cold can be removed by household fires. My weariness can be relieved by outward rest. But no outward thing can make my heart pure. The calmest day will not calm my passions. The fairest scene will not beautify my soul. The richest music will not make harmony within. The breezes can cleanse the air, but no breeze can cleanse the spirit. This world has not provided for my heart. It has provided for my eye; it has provided for my ear; it has provided for my touch; it has provided for my taste; it has provided for my sense of beauty, but it has not provided for my heart. Provide Thou for my heart, O Lord! It is the only unwinged bird in all creation; give it wings, O Lord! Earth has failed to give it wings; its very power of loving has often dragged it in the mire. Be Thou the strength of my heart! Be Thou its fortress in temptation, its shield in remorse, its covert in the storm, its star in the night, its voice in the solitude! Guide it in its gloom; help it in its heat; direct it in its doubt; calm it in its conflict; fan it in its faintness; prompt it in its perplexity; lead it through its labyrinths; raise it from its ruins! I can not rule this heart of mine; keep it under the shadow of Thine own wings."

True, some are satisfied with the human spectacular and are easy victims of shallow substitutes; but there is a real answer to the prayer of the soul that will not be satisfied with any thing else. Elijah stood in the door of the cave while the earthquake passed, but God was not in that. The whirlwind passed, also, but God was not revealed. The fire appeared, but yet God was silent. After all, the "still small voice" of God called out and the persistent old prophet was there to hear. In like manner today, when one will brush aside all shams and substitutes and hunt out God with the never-to-be-denied petition, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," God will make Himself known.

The epochs in the revelation of God to the individual are the birth of the Spirit and the baptism with the Spirit. The progresses of revelation are without number or limitation. "It remains yet to be seen what God will do with and for a man who will let Him have His way with Him."

CHAPTER 4

THE UNDESIGNED CALF

“I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf”
 (~~1922~~ Exodus 32:24).

THE words of this Scripture passage constitute part of Aaron’s defense of his part in the making of the golden calf which the Israelites worshiped as an idol. In substance, he said that he had no design as to what would be the form of the objects which would come of the casting of the gold into the fire. “I cast in this gold,” and to my surprise, “there came out this calf.”

But, much as we dislike to reflect upon Israel’s first high priest, Aaron was not giving a true record of what had occurred; for the record says that Aaron received the gold at the hands of the people and “fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf.” This may have been a very imperfect image of a calf, but it was the best that Aaron could do, for he molded the metal into the likeness of a calf and then removed the defects with a graving tool. The fact is, no calf ever “just happens;” there is always a cause.

It seems now that many of the things that science made us believe, much against our will and inclination, a few years ago, are not true after all. They argued with us until they made us believe that the Gulf Stream actually runs clear across the Atlantic Ocean and modifies the climate of England and Western Europe; now they tell us that this is a mistake, the Gulf Stream is lost in the deep ocean just a little distance off the Newfoundland coast. Well, I believed that to begin with, and if they would only have let me alone, I would have been correct all the time. As it is, I went through all the cumbersome and farfetched evidence for nothing and am back at the beginning. Nevertheless, there is one thing: they will not get me to admit that it “just happens” that the climate of England is milder than a place of corresponding latitude in America.

I listen with some patience to the evolutionist as long as he tells me that certain adequate causes accomplished certain results; but when he begins

to say that certain things actually happened he is sure they happened but he posits no adequate cause, right there I part company with him. All life started out either from the same place or from many places simultaneously; anyway, nothing adequate started it — it just started. Existence came from non-existence without any special cause order came out of chaos without any intelligence to direct it; life came without a Life Giver; mind came from unthinking matter; species continued on down the main line or branched off into myriad variations according to the decrees of chance. I do not believe any of this. If it sounds pharisaical to say that I am too religious to believe it, it will suit me just as well to say that I am too intelligent to believe it. It is no better to me than Aaron's calf story. There is a cause — adequate cause — for every result.

But the question of origin is subordinate to present being. We could excuse a man for coming from a monkey more easily than we can pardon him for being a monkey still. It would be better to be an animal lifted from the brute state by the cables of will and faith than to be a renegade angel. What we were is incidental to what we are.

Every child has a right to be well-born, though the defense of this right is left entirely to others. The general type of the human species is inherently determined; but this general type is affected by the distant and immediate progenitors; and it may be further modified by direct prenatal influences, either ignorantly or intentionally exerted. The first primary qualification of parenthood is the willingness and ability to endow one's progeny with healthy bodies, sound minds, and normal moral natures in which there is no bias resulting from accumulated depravity. But since none of us are permitted to choose our grandfathers, it is not proper that I should do more than to say that God and our parents have given us a certain amount of capital, and we prove our worthiness to exist by the increase that we can show on that original capital. Still, we must not forget that many a child is handicapped in the race of life by the meagerness of the legacy which was given him at birth. It takes training to make any colt a three-minute horse, and though the very best training will not make a three-minute horse out of a Shetland colt, still it will make a faster Shetland than it would have been without the training.

The second primary qualification for parenthood is the willingness and ability to give the child proper environment during its most plastic years. The home has more to do with the making of the child than any other factor. If a child was trained at home, he is likely to reflect the molding and the graving which he received there. Of course we must acknowledge the power of individual choice and allow it to account for the exceptions to the rule, nevertheless, it is very seldom that one can just throw brute gold into the fire and a calf will walk out without any molding and graving.

I used to preach that grace was a sufficient factor in the training of children, but I am convinced that it is not true. Some of the best people that I know have made a failure in the training of their children. Yet, with all that I know of families and children, the youth of my acquaintance are in my judgment, molded and graven into their present form, very largely, by the environment to which they have been subjected.

There is more or less of what the theologians call antinomianism in us all. This is manifested in the tendency to exaggerate God's responsibility in human affairs. There is a reality in the transforming grace of God, but there is a human responsibility that always precedes the Divine. Christians — true Christians — have a very large human element, hence a very large human responsibility; as well as a very essential Divine element in their makeup. The Christian home implies more than prayer and Bible reading. It implies more than prohibitions and moral precepts. I think I have seen homes where the parents were both professing Christians, where there was family prayer, where there were many of seen things that were truly Christian, and yet I would have been surprised to have seen strong, stalwart Christians come out of that home. Some may think that I am hinting that there was hypocrisy and inconsistency. I do not mean that at all; but there was something lacking and Christianity was made odious to the children there. I have seen parents accept an impractical attitude toward social questions, or a rigid policy toward education and progress, things that might have remained neutral, if they had not elected to make them tests of religion and by their attitude and policies they convinced their children of the impracticability and in-adaptitude of Christianity, and the children went out from Christian parents to become practical infidels. It was not a lack of old-time religion, but a lack of old-fashioned common sense that had wrought the disaster.

A man bewailed the delinquency of his eighteen-year-old boy and declared he could not understand how such results could come. In substance, he said, "I cast in the gold, and there came out this calf." But with a little investigation, I found that the boy had never been taught obedience as a child. He had played with questionable company, had roamed the streets and alleys, committed petty larcenies and indulged in by-words and questionable conversation since before he was of school age. The father was indulgent, the mother was kind, the neighbors were mad and the boy went wild. But as I looked him over, I could see the certain marks of the mold and of the graving tools; he was no accident.

Our argument for Christian schools and for Christian education is very simple. If the child is sent to school where his teachers dance, attend the picture shows and the theater, teach the various silly guesses of evolution and mock at religion; and where the students, as a whole, follow in the steps of their superiors and talk the talk which such associations naturally encourage; and where worldliness in its various forms and fads reigns without protest, then what wonder if the child does not turn out to be a foreign missionary, or a prayermeeting leader? Expensive as the task is, we must, nevertheless, provide for the education of our youth under proper Christian influences, if we save them for the kingdom of heaven.

But I can not pass without observing that, after all, man is the great factor in his own making or unmaking. Even with a small birthright, he may still amass a fortune. Roosevelt was such a weak lad that his parents sent him to a private school, lest he should get injured in play with the larger crowds at the public school. But he set in deliberately to "build" a body, and succeeded so well that he became husky, able, one critic said, to cope with the leading prize fighters of his day, but for his near sightedness which compelled him to wear glasses. Demosthenes has been represented to us as of mean bearing, a stammering speech, and embarrassed poise; but he overcame these defects and became the greatest orator of antiquity. There are others who never could get rid of their handicaps, but set in and won the race anyway. Paul could not get rid of his "thorn in the flesh," So sought grace to out-match it. Martin Wells Knapp was always frail, and often labored in pain, but he did a lifetime's work before he was out of his forties. Newton knew as little when he was born as any of us. Fletcher

was as depraved by sin as other mortals, but arose to eminence in holy living by forces of his own election.

Reared among the moonshiners of the backwoods, Lincoln refused to drink, and arose to the highest place from the most obscure environment. Garfield learned to read after he was eighteen and then went on from the presidency of a college to the presidency of the United States. Such men followed the intuitions of their own minds and hearts which rebelled against their environments, and were led out of the darkness into light. There were no schools, so Lincoln studied at home; there were no blackboards and chalk, so he used charcoal and a split pine board; there were no libraries, so he walked miles to borrow books; there were no opportunities for promotion, so he said he would spend his time getting ready, and then, "maybe the opportunity would come." It did come, and the nation is glad that it found Lincoln ready. Good things can "come out of Nazareth," even if Nazareth is off the main thoroughfares and proverbial for its lack of culture and progress. Such "good things" are not the products of Nazareth, but they must "come out" in order to fill their mission.

This is a world of wheat and tares, no matter where you go. You can find almost any thing and almost any kind of person, if you will make a sufficient search. And the things and persons that we seek affect us much more than those which come to us unbidden. The bird which flies over my head, may do so without my permission; but I have formed an alliance with the one that "makes a nest in my hair." The richest man this world ever saw was voluntarily without a place to lay His head; the kingliest man had no crown, but one of thorns, and no throne but a cross. The humblest man was crucified on the charge of blasphemy, and though crucified between two thieves and "numbered with transgressors," He still remained, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

The eagle, it is said, rises faster in the face of the storm than in the time of calm. So, the contrast may stir the awakened to arise from the slime and darkness of his surroundings. The old maxim, "Blood will tell" may as well be an encouraging message as a disheartening one. It is the force to which one willingly submits himself that becomes the greatest factor in his molding. The very effort required in the resisting of the low, the base and

the vile will develop stamina and manhood in the overcomer. The necessity of choosing, occasions one of the most useful means for the molding of the man. The world is full of would-be friends, choose for yourself; but remember that if you choose them, you have elected to make them factors in your own making. The world is full of books — choose and read; but remember that you will become like the books which you choose to read. There are ways, and ways, and ways in the world, select the one that you will travel; but remember that the way you will go will color y our life quite as much as you will affect the course itself.

Finally, I must observe that all men have a religious nature and that it is the dominant nature. All other things are and ought to be subject to a man's religion. But this makes it the more important that he should have true objectives in his religion. Every man is "assimilated into the likeness of the object of his worship." The atheist becomes hard like the heart of the flinty, unyielding fate which he, in reality, worships. The agnostic applies his system of doubt to himself and to his friends and becomes fickle and faithless. The infidel has truly departed from his fidelity (as the word implies), and is unworthy of trust by his fellow-beings. The old Frenchman, descendant from the Huguenots, who was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, went to Paris from his home in the Pyrenees mountains. He rented a suite of rooms and paid the first month's rent. The landlord inquired whether he would require a receipt. "No," said the plain man of simple faith and simple virtues, "A receipt is not necessary. I know I have paid you, you know I have paid you, and God is witness between us." The proud Parisian curled his lip and said derisively, "So you still believe in God, do you?" "Why, yes," said the Christian, "don't you?" "No, not any more," replied the Parisian. "Then, in that case," said the Christian, thoughtfully, "I will take a receipt." The formalist's heart will die in order to conform to his creed and practice. The fanatic's intellect will warp and waver in order to meet the demands of his errata. But "a sound heart doeth good like a medicine." The true believer has a tendency to become "assimilated into Christ's likeness; and among the many and glorious phases of the Christ character is that of perfect manhood. The strongest, bravest, wisest, best man; as well as the weakest, most cowardly, most ignorant, and most fallen, may look up expectantly to Jesus Christ and pray believingly:

*“Oh, to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer,
This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I’ll forfeit all of earth’s treasures,
Jesus, thy perfect likeness to wear.”*

And from such a mold, always the very best that you are able to choose, there will come out an image, which will still need the chiseling of the graving tools of life’s further tests, but which, far from being of accidental Origin, is designed to be entirely like Him, when you shall “See Him as He is.”

CHAPTER 5

THE LAW OF LIFE

“And who knoweth whether thou hast come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (¹⁷⁰⁴Esther 4:14).

TIMES are discriminatory and will not use out of date material. It is a common idea with each generation that the world's work is all done and that there is nothing left but to admire the accomplishments of the fathers. What is the use? Columbus has already discovered America, Watts has discovered the hidden power of steam; Bell has invented the telephone; Edison has perfected the phonograph, and Ford has made the automobile. What is left to do, and to what new place can a man go?

Alexander could not have conquered the world at any other period than the one at which he appeared and Napoleon arose by means of the crisis in French politics. The birth of Washington was timed, earlier or later would not have done. Lincoln might have died in obscurity had he waited twenty years to have been born.

The steamship seems to have been perfected before our day and the frontier of American civilization seems to have jumped into the Pacific Ocean. The sciences and the arts are so far developed that one may study and work all his life and then not add one iota to the sum total of human knowledge or leave a single masterpiece.

And the fathers did their work so well that it is difficult to improve their models. The fathers had the advantage: many of their discoveries were really just on the surface any way. They picked up a lot of gold that did not have to be mined. They did not have to be very high to be above the masses. They did not have to know much to be teachers in their day.

Yes, the easy things are all done every succeeding generation has found it so. It is more difficult to make good this year than it was last. Tomorrow will require better timber for its construction than we have used today.

It is doubtful whether Wesley could “hold the crowds” today with his doctrinal and argumentative sermons as he used to do in England; the methods used in the great universities of the Middle Ages would leave a school today without a student; Socrates discussed questions in which we are not interested and Thales was mistaken in his scientific guesses. So, you see, it was easier to “get by” then than it is now.

The early financiers have “gobbled up” the country’s resources and “there is no chance for a poor man now.” The fact is, we have fallen upon the hardest times that the world ever saw — I say this seriously. It is difficult to make good now days.

But “easy times” have always fathered weak men. There are no great nations within the limits of the torrid zone. It requires the winds and snow of winter to drive men to the development of architecture, and to the weaving of cloth. When nature is too kind, she spoils her child. And like things are true of organized society. The more strenuous the times the better opportunity for developing the texture of manhood. If the air offered no resistance, the wings of the bird would never enable him to rise and fly. If our tasks are hard today, they present the opportunity for us to rise higher than any before us.

The labor of the fathers is not lost, unless we either ignore them or go back and spend our time doing their work again. We may become “the true ancients by standing upon the shoulders of those who have gone before us.” We must begin where they left off. We have often spoken of the wisdom of our fathers, but, as a British statesman recently said, “we would do well to imitate their courage.” They traveled much in paths that others had never seen, and if we are as courageous as they, there are pathless continents of progress and possession ahead for us, also.

Starting with the material side of life, we must admit that the times call for men. The surface coal is gone and we must now mine deeply. The well watered sections are occupied, we must build great irrigation projects. Timber is becoming scarce, we must now build more substantially of iron, stone and concrete. Life’s standards are lifted, we must all “speed up” on production. Individually, it takes a better man to succeed than formerly. It is necessary now for any worth while enterprise to be “taken apart.” That is, no man can do much without co-operation. But not very many

competent people are willing to cooperate with an incompetent, a tyrant or a rogue. No matter what we may think of our men of big business, it speaks well for them that there are so many who are willing to work with them. And it is not a question of one man getting a great many people to let him do their thinking and planning, it is the much more difficult thing of getting an army of people to associate their thinking and planning for a common end.

A man who is reported to have made two million dollars in the business of farming was approached by another in this wise: "Well, of course, you have made a success, but you had the opportunity. Land and labor were cheap when you required them both and you got in on 'the ground floor.'" But the great man of success said that if he were a young man of twenty-one now he could start in with nothing and die at seventy worth a million dollars. When asked how he would do it, his answer was different from what the majority of us would have expected. He said, "First, I would go and marry a good, intelligent girl who had been brought up in about the same circumstances of life as myself; I would then go and hire to some successful farmer in a good, well-developed section of the country. I would want the farmer to furnish me a house, a cow, a garden spot, a place for chickens and pay me fifty dollars a month. My wife and I would live on the income from the cow, chickens and garden and would use only one hundred dollars a year of my wages. I would open an account with a conservative, progressive bank, and would make my deposits regularly. At the end of two years, I would be free from debt, would have a thousand dollars in the bank and my banker's confidence; the rest would be easy." I don't think a young man should set in to get rich; he should have a higher purpose: I do not know whether this man's plan would bring the remarkable success that he suggests or not; but it takes a better man to make a success in temporal things than it ever did before; for even thieves will not trust a thief and a tyrant will not brook the tyranny of another.

You can be a Bolshevik without any one's consent, but if you succeed with the management of property and goods, you must be a man that others can trust. If you teach others to steal for you, they will steal from you. No man ever laid the foundation for an enduring fortune with money that he won on a bet. You who are looking out upon the prospects of life and planning for temporal gains; have you really "come to the kingdom for

such a time as this?" Or will you sit around and envy the lucky dead and curse the prosperous living, and wait for chance to make you rich?

Domestic life is a more serious matter than it used to be. I know we speak much of "the good old days" when separations were few and divorce was a scandal, and we all admit that we have fallen upon evil times from the standpoint of the home. But we, as usual, want the good things of the past without accepting the evils. How many who rejoice over "the emancipation of woman" realize that this is one of the very things that makes the domestic life of today the problem that it is? In the "good old days" there was almost no alternative for a girl but matrimony. Woman was offered but few educational advantages and almost all the lucrative and honorable positions of life were closed to her. And after she married, there was nothing for her to do but to stick to her husband. If she left him, there was scandal, and the matter of a material existence was a real problem to face, while a remarriage would be another doubtful venture. The result was that as regularly as girls came to womanhood they married, taking "the best the market offered at that time"; and they endured the brutality and neglect which were so often their lot; for there was no better alternative. But whether we like it or not, a new day has come. Girls are this day taking better advantage of educational opportunities than boys, and they are making good. Almost every occupation and calling in life is as open to women as to men. And there is no more reason why a girl should marry now than there is why a boy should marry. And there is no more reason why a woman should live with a drunken, adulterous husband than there is that a man should keep a drunken, unclean wife. What is the result? Well, people are no better on the average, than they used to be and so the young women who prefer "single bliss" go on the even tenor of their way without the necessity of having any one provide "bread and butter" for them. Also the divorce mills grind merrily on and women put away their husbands and husbands put away their wives. I do not say that men and women are either any better or any worse than they used to be; only just the times are different and "what's in, outs" more than it used to.

Nevertheless, human society can not stand without the home. If the home dies, civilization will perish. "Male and female created He them," and designed that one man should have one woman for his wife and that they two should become one flesh, live together after God's ordinance, bear

children and train them up to fear and honor God and to fit their souls for the sky. But with our changed conditions, home building has become the highest art. The “cave man” could go out and drag his wife in by the hair, beat off competitors with a club and keep his spouse and progeny in subjection through fear. Our forebears of contiguous generations allowed a lot of license to the husband who was “a good provider,” and held their women in line by bribes of “bread and butter” which the woman did not have ability to get, apart from her husband, and by threats of slander and disgrace. But every young woman now is expected to “look before she leaps,” and even after she has “leaped” she is still capable of forcing Father Time to give her bread and persuading Mother Earth to give down her milk, and if she has cause, the public conscience does not damn her for ruing her bargain and going back to her maiden rights. I do not think more stringent marriage requirements or more exacting divorce conditions will either one do much to alleviate our difficulties. The trouble is not in our laws, but in us. It is ourselves that need the “revision.”

The parties to matrimony have few allies, outside of themselves; and there are many things to make this old-fashioned art the most difficult of all, just now. But, in spite of all, marriage is an institution of God and is the highest, noblest and purest of earthly relations; and it is worth all that it costs to make it a success. True love, genuine religion, industry and common sense will brook every hindrance to matrimonial felicity and make the estate a glorious success. But each thing I have named is a gem of character within itself, and too many try to get by without some of these most essential possessions. Our task is a difficult one, and it requires better men and better women to build homes now than it ever did before. In all seriousness, I ask, “Can you qualify for the undertaking?”

Social life, also, is now so complicated as to be all but undefinable. The ancient master and servant have been replaced by the corporation and the labor union. King and subject have become government and “the people.” Men no longer get their clothing from the backs of their own sheep and their food from their own fields and olive yards; but we go to the utmost parts of the earth for the things we have learned to want. Duty and mercy, honesty and truthfulness, business and politics are not simple words any more. The definition of these terms may be clear enough, but the application is not easy. Freedom and liberty, patriotism and justice —

what do these terms mean to us when we try to calculate the scope which they are permitted to cover? What is justice, and who is my neighbor? How may I do good to some without doing ill to others, amidst the complications and the clash of interests of my own times?

These are not idle questions. It is true, our fathers never had to answer them, but must meet them and answer them. In all reverence for their memory, I do not believe our fathers could have answered these distressingly perplexing questions. But every man to his own generation. Ours is both the best and the worst day that has come yet. If we can only be sufficient for this day! But God knew the times in which we were to serve, and we may be assured that He will help us in answer to our plea for succor in this great time of need.

But our most perplexing sphere is our moral and religious situation. Old-fashioned virtues, and old-time religion are both fundamental as realities, and unchanging as to essence. We may well be glad for these facts. The fundamental needs of men are the same now as in the days of our fathers. A Christian of the first century was, in every essential, characteristic and practice, the same as a Christian of the twentieth century. And the task of bringing men to God is unchanged as to its purpose and results.

But we are living in "strange and awful times." The pendulum of religious attitude has swung clear away from the side of superstition and credulity, where it was in past days, and is now over on the side of irreverence and doubt. The brutality of an honest past has given place to the refinement of a shallow gentility. The piety of the ancient who acknowledged his lack of enlightenment has been replaced by ungodliness of the modernist who claims to know. The open, fierce opposition to the work of God, which usually could be transformed into zealous care for the upbuilding of the faith which once they sought to destroy, has been succeeded by a sullen and stubborn indifference which is as hard as adamant. People used to "come to the meetings to scoff, and remain to pray" now they will scarcely come at all. The holiness meeting used to be an attraction, but now the cheap, vile picture show entertains the light minded, seven nights in the week.

In spite of the large proportion of religious professors and church members in this country, there are but few vital Christians. In spite of the unusual amount of philanthropy, there are few revivals. Church hospitals get more “penitents” than the mourner’s benches in the churches. Genuine salvation work is an unusual spectacle in more than half the churches of the nation. And there is no use for us to sit about and sigh, “Oh, for the return of the days of Wesley”; “Oh, for the raising up of a Finney or an Inskip.” Wesley’s days will never come back, and Finney and Inskip served their generation. There is really not going to be any one here but just us until we leave, and when we leave our day will also be passed. So, we are our day’s only dependence. However poor we may serve, we have come for just this time.

God’s plan for “making disciples of men” does not include a very active ministration of angels. God will send the saving message through men who have been saved themselves. And His plan does not include a very full ministry on the part of those who are dead. He evangelizes each generation by and through the men of that generation. We know our own age, and its needs better than any other men could know them. We have literally “Come to the kingdom for such a time as this.” God has complimented us by giving us so difficult a generation to reach and save. The fact that He put us here at this time is proof that it is in us to make good, if we do not cheat ourselves out of our own resources.

A man has to be stronger, better educated, and a more earnest worker today to succeed in breaking through the Devil’s trenches and capturing souls for God than would have been necessary in doing the same work in the days of the past. These are days that try one’s mettle. If you are unwilling to study until you secure a good education, you can not do much good in this day. If you are not sanctified wholly by the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, you may be able to keep out of the clutches of the Devil, but you will not snatch many souls from the burning.

“Such a time as this!” There was a crisis on when these words were spoken; the lives of tens of thousands were in the balance and the odds were against them. There was only one who might be able to stay the catastrophe, and this appeal was addressed to her.

“Such a time as this!” A crisis is on now the souls of the millions of our generation are in the balance and the odds are against them. The appeal is to the only ones who can possibly help — the appeal is to you and me. Can we cope with the situation? God is looking down upon the thousands of our young men and young women to see if they will awake and arise to the demands of their hour.

CHAPTER 6

LIFE'S PURPOSE AND END

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man” (²⁰²³ Ecclesiastes 12:13).

THE ultimate basis of ethics is neither Egoism nor Altruism, but Theism. My own highest good and that of my neighbor is bound up in my proper adjustment to God. Even the well accepted motto “Others” is relative, not absolute. “For me to live is Christ” is the only maxim that requires neither limitation nor explanation.

Origin, duty and destiny are all described in the one word, “By whom are all things, for whom are all things, to whom are all things.” From, for and to God, is the whole history of the world’s best lives.

Anything — every thing — is bad if it does not help me please God. Every thing has value according to its relation to Him, and nothing can be spoken of as a positive and absolute good until we know where and how it acknowledges and serves Him.

Taken in its details, life is a hopeless complication of conflicting rights, a mysterious bundle of unfathomable purposes, and leads to an end that is indefinable. If we would straighten out the skein, we must start where all things in heaven and earth had their beginning with God. We must trace His plan through the meanderings of life’s course, and must look for the end in “Him who is invisible.”

Let us name all of human knowledge “science” and ask, then, is it a good thing or a bad thing? When we go to answer we will be obliged to say that it is both and neither. For its goodness or badness depends upon the use that is made of it, and that factor is not involved in the material given in the premises.

Even goodness and badness, in their broad sense, can not be defined as independent terms; for a good thing may become evil and a thing that was

intended for evil, like persecution, or affliction, may turn out to be good. I can not say that sickness, sorrow and poverty are evils; and that health, happiness and riches are good. I must know 'the relation of these things to God and His great purpose before I can tell whether they were good or ill.

What is the highest good of life, anyway? While admitting that this is a difficult question and one that has brought many answers, yet I think when it is all said, that the word pleasure expresses the idea as well as any that we might find. I know this word has been degraded, but I still insist that it is a good word, and that it has only been marred by its associations. I think there is nothing better than that a man should seek satisfaction in this world. I know I say this at some risk, for the word satisfaction has also been degraded by use. Still, I think that man was made with a capacity for God, and that capacity brought a desire and longing for God. Many have misinterpreted their soul cravings and have gone after pleasure and satisfaction on the lower levels of human possibilities, but they have never found satisfaction there and they never will. The soul's call for pleasure is but the echo of God's invitation for that soul to come to Him.

Going out with our proposition that pleasure is the highest good, and taking our broad definition of "science," then we will find that knowledge, within itself, has never added one iota to the sum total of man's happiness. Our superstitious forebears were tormented by their belief in witches, haunts and jack-o'-lanterns; but they lived in blissful ignorance of microbes and disease germs. They drank out of the common drinking cup, dried on the community towel and died when they "were old and full of years." They enjoyed the cooling breezes of the summer untrammelled by screens; for they did not know that there was anything insufficient about the peach tree branch as a means for keeping the flies away for just the moment when they were eating the food. Their mode of travel was not so fast as ours is today, but they were not feverish to get there, and so they had a better time while they were on the way. Postage was higher then than now, but they did not have to send so many letters. There were no telegraph and telephone, but, having never had them, they did not miss them.

Domestic troubles, suicide, insanity, and other certain evidences of unhappiness have multiplied with the increase of knowledge. Education to

be worth anything to the promotion of satisfaction must be “Christian Education.” Educating a man without, also, making his heart right and training his moral faculties makes him neither better nor happier. It makes him more efficient in the doing of whatever he chooses to do, but it does not affect his choosing. Discipline in a school where Christ is not exalted is, indeed, a serious undertaking.

Education badly used is a bad thing; education simply employed in the efficient doing of things to which morality does not attach and with no ultra motive is neither good nor bad; education which is from Him as its source, for Him in its purpose and to Him as its end is a wonderfully good thing.

Then let us summarize all we can do as Art, and go out again with our proposition that pleasure is the highest good. We will find that Art has never been the mother of true satisfaction.

Let us go to the fine arts: let us speak of poetry and of literature. How few of the poets were spiritually sufficient and truly happy! And, if you will take the number of those who were moral, strong and contented and subtract from that number those of them who were Christians and who found in this, and not in their art, the true source of their satisfaction, the remaining list would truly be a short one. I will not specify, but those of you who have made yourselves familiar with the addicts of literature and who were, as we say “devoted” to their art will recall also that the escutcheons of many of the most gifted and brilliant were smutted by scandalous living or marred by personal despondency and unhappiness.

Music, which has been mentioned as the “Queen of Arts” has required the most exacting worship from her devotees, but she has not met their deep needs. Here, too, we would refrain from specifying; but who will champion the depth of character and proclaim the spiritual sufficiency of the masters of the art? Why need the great pianist be an inveterate addict of the cigarette or a weak slave to harmful drugs? What defense can be made of the great singer who is wonderful “when he is not too drunk”? What is the domestic reputation of the “stars” in the opera? Even if it is admitted that musicians are no better and no worse than other people, the point is lost for the sufficiency of the art. Music is a curse when it is debased by the Devil and wicked men and made the handmaiden and

associate of wine and the dance. It is neither good nor bad when it is detached from all other factors. It is a high and noble art only when it is made a Christian art.

It is useless for us to go on with illustrations. Patriotism, Philanthropy, and every human sentiment and practice will be found to meet the same fate under consideration. They are all insufficient within themselves and take their virtue or their vice from their relation to God's will and kingdom.

But anything and everything is good, if I can make it help me honor and glorify God. The conclusion of the whole matter is reached in fearing God and keeping His commandments. The pleasure that Science could not discover is mine when I please God. The satisfaction that Art was unable to give is a present to me when I "do the things that are pleasing in His sight."

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