

Making the Most of Life - Part 1

by J.R. Miller

The sermon teaches that true life is found in self-sacrifice and living for others, as exemplified by Christ's own sacrifice.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24

Topics: "Self-Sacrifice", "Living for Others"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the profound responsibility of life as a sacred trust from God, urging believers to live earnestly and selflessly. He illustrates that true fulfillment comes from losing oneself for the sake of others, drawing parallels with nature where sacrifice leads to greater usefulness. Miller encourages a life of self-renunciation, suggesting that only through such sacrifice can one truly bless the world and glorify God. He highlights the importance of presenting oneself as a living sacrifice to God, integrating this principle into every aspect of life, and recognizing that even mundane tasks can be avenues for divine purpose. Ultimately, he reassures that God values every act of love and service, promising that no true sacrifice goes unnoticed.

Transcript

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by J. R. Miller, 1891

A Word of Introduction.

To have the gift of life is a solemn thing. Life is God's most sacred trust. It is not ours to do with as we please; it must be accounted for--every particle, every power, every possibility of it.

These chapters are written with the purpose and hope of stimulating those who may read them to earnest and worthy living. If they seem urgent, if they present continually motives of thoughtfulness, if they dwell almost exclusively on the side of obligation and responsibility, if they make duty ever prominent and call to self-renunciation and self-sacrifice, leaving small space for play--it is because life itself is really most serious, and because we must meet it seriously, recognizing its sacred meaning and girding ourselves for it with all earnestness and energy.

If this book shall teach any how to make the most of the life God has entrusted to them, that will be reward enough for the work of its preparation. To this service it is affectionately dedicated, in the name of Him

who made the most of his blessed life--by losing it in love's sacrifice, and who calls us also to die to self that we may live unto God.

J. R. Miller

Chapter 1. Making the Most of Life.

"Then Jesus said to his disciples--If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it--but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:24-26

According to our Lord's teaching, we can make the most of our life by losing it. He says that losing the life for his sake is saving it. There is a lower self that must be trampled down and trampled to death by the higher self. The alabaster vase must be broken, that the ointment may flow out to fill the house. The grapes must be crushed--that there may be wine to drink. The wheat must be bruised--before it can become bread to feed hunger.

It is so in life. Whole, unbruised, unbroken men are of but little use. True living is really a succession of battles, in which the better triumphs over the worse, the spirit over the flesh. Until we cease to live for self--we have not begun to live at all.

We can never become truly useful and helpful to others, until we have learned this lesson. One may live for self and yet do many pleasant things for others; but one's life can never become the great blessing to the world it was meant to be--until the law of self-sacrifice has become its heart principle.

A great oak stands in the forest. It is beautiful in its majesty; it is ornamental; it casts a pleasant shade. Under its branches the children play; among its boughs the birds sing. One day the woodman comes with his axe, and the tree quivers in all its branches, under his sturdy blows. "I am being destroyed!" it cries. So it seems, as the great tree crashes down to the ground. And the children are sad because they can play no more beneath the broad branches; the birds grieve because they can no more nest and sing amid the summer foliage.

But let us follow the tree's history. It is cut into boards, and built into a beautiful cottage, where human hearts find their happy nest. Or it is used in making a great organ which leads the worship of a congregation. The losing of its life was the saving of it. It died that it might become deeply, truly useful.

The plates, cups, dishes, and vases which we use in our homes and on our tables, once lay as common clay in the earth, quiet and restful--but in no way doing good, serving man. Then came men with picks, and the clay was harshly torn out and plunged into a mortar and beaten, and ground in a mill, then pressed, and then put into a furnace, and burned and burned, at last coming forth in beauty, and beginning its history of usefulness. It was apparently destroyed that it might begin to be of service.

A great church-building is going up, and the stones that are being laid on the walls are brought out of the dark quarry for this purpose. We can imagine them complaining, groaning, and repining, as the quarry men's drills and hammers struck them. They supposed they were being destroyed as they were torn out from the bed of rock where they had lain undisturbed for ages, and were cut into blocks, and lifted out, and then as they were chiseled and dressed into form. But they were being destroyed only that they might become useful. They become part of a new sanctuary, in which God is to be worshiped, where the Gospel

will be preached, where penitent sinners will find the Christ-Savior, where sorrowing ones will be comforted. Surely it was better that these stones should be torn out, even amid agony, and built into the wall of the church, than that they should have lain ages more, undisturbed in the dark quarry. They were saved from uselessness, by being destroyed.

These are simple illustrations of the law which applies also in human life. We must die to be useful--to be truly a blessing. Our Lord put this truth in a little parable, when he said that the seed must fall into the earth and die that it may bear fruit. Christ's own cross is the highest illustration of this. His friends said he wasted his precious life; but was that life wasted when Jesus was crucified?

People said that Harriet Newell's beautiful life was wasted when she gave it to missions, and then died and was buried far from home--bride, missionary, mother, saint, all in one short year--without even telling to one heathen woman or child the story of the Savior. But was that lovely young life indeed wasted? No; all this century her name has been one of the strongest inspirations to missionary work, and her influence has brooded everywhere, touching thousands of hearts of gentle women and strong men, as the story of her consecration has been told. Had Harriet Newell lived a thousand years of quiet, sweet life at home, she could not have done the work that she did in one short year by giving her life, as it seemed, an unavailing sacrifice. She lost her life that she might save it. She died that she might live. She offered herself a living sacrifice that she might become useful.

In heart and spirit we must all do the same if we would ever be a real blessing in the world. We must be willing to lose our life--to sacrifice ourself, to give up our own way, our own ease, our own comfort, possibly even our own life; for there come times when one's life must literally be lost in order to be saved.

There is more grandeur in five minutes of self-renunciation, than in a whole lifetime of self-interest and self-seeking. There is something Christly in it. How poor, paltry, and mean, alongside the records of such deeds, appear men's selfish strivings, self-interests' boldest venturing!

We must get the same spirit in us if we would become in any large and true sense a blessing to the world. We must die to live. We must lose our life to save it. We must lay self on the altar to be consumed in the fire of love, in order to glorify God and do good to men. Our work may be fair, even though mingled with self; but it is only when self is sacrificed, burned on the altar of consecration, consumed in the hot flames of love, that our work becomes really our best, a fit offering to be made to our King.

We must not fear that in such sacrifice, such renunciation and annihilation of self, we shall lose ourselves. God will remember every deed of love, every forgetting of self, every emptying out of life. Though we work in obscurest places, where no human tongue shall ever voice our praise, still there is a record kept, and some day rich and glorious reward will be given. Is not God's praise better than man's?

Mary's ointment was wasted when she broke the vase and poured it upon her Lord. Yes; but suppose she had left the ointment in the unbroken vase? What remembrance would it then have had? Would there have been any mention of it on the Gospel pages? Would her deed of careful keeping have been told over all the world? She broke the vase and poured it out, lost it, sacrificed it, and now the perfume fills all the earth. We may keep our life if we will, carefully preserving it from waste; but we shall have no reward, no honor from it, at the last. But if we empty it out in loving service, we shall make it a lasting blessing to the world, and we shall be remembered forever.

Chapter 2. Laid on God's Altar.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God." Romans 12:1

We have to die to live. That is the central law of life. We must burn to give light to the world, or to give forth fragrance of incense to God's praise. We cannot save ourselves and at the same time make anything worthy of our life, or be in any deep and true sense an honor to God and a blessing to the world. The altar stands in the foreground of every life, and can be passed by only at the cost of all that is noblest and best.

All the practical side of true religion, is summed up in the exhortation of Paul, that we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. Anciently, a man brought a lamb and presented it to God, laid it on the altar, to be consumed by God's fire. In like manner, we are to present our bodies. The first thing is not to be a worker, a preacher, a savior of souls; the very first thing in a Christian life is to present one's self to God, to lay one's self on the altar. We need to understand this. It is easier to talk and work for Christ--than to give ourselves to him. It is easier to offer God a few activities--than to give him our heart. But the heart must be first, else even the largest gifts and services are not acceptable.

"A living sacrifice." A sacrifice is something really given to God, to be his altogether and forever. We cannot take it back any more. One could not lay a lamb on God's altar and then a minute or two afterward run up and take it off. We cannot be God's today and our own tomorrow. If we become his at all, in a sacrifice which he accepts, we are his always.

How can we present ourselves as a sacrifice to God? By the complete surrender of our heart and will and all our powers to him. Absolute obedience is consecration. The soldier learns it. He is not his own. He does not think for himself, to, make his own plans; he has but one duty--to obey. Payson used to talk of his "lost will"--lost in God's will, he meant. That is what presenting one's self a sacrifice means.

It is a "living" sacrifice. Anciently, the sacrifices were killed; they were laid dead on the altar. We are to present ourselves living. The fire consumed the ancient offering; the fire of God's love and of his Spirit consumes our lives by purifying them and filling them with divine life. Those on whom the fire fell on the day of Pentecost, became new men. There was a new life in their souls, a new ardor, a new enthusiasm. They were on fire with love for Christ. They entered upon a service in which all their energies flamed.

The living sacrifice includes all the life--not what it is now only--but all that it may become. Life is not a diamond--but a seed, with possibilities of endless growth. Lyman Abbott has used this illustration: "I pluck an acorn from the greensward, and hold it to my ear; and this is what it says to me: 'By and by the birds will come and nest in me. By and by I will furnish shade for the cattle. By and by I will provide warmth for the home in the pleasant fire. By and by I will be shelter from the storm to those who have gone under the roof. By and by I will be the strong ribs of the great vessel, and the tempest will beat against me in vain, while I carry men across the Atlantic.' 'O foolish little acorn, will you be all this?' I ask. And the acorn answers, 'Yes; God and I.'"

I look into the faces of a company of children, and I hear a whisper, saying: "By and by I will be a great blessing to many. By and by other lives will come and find nest and home in me. By and by the weary will sit in the shadow of my strength. By and by I will sit as comforter in a home of sorrow. By and by I will speak the words of Christ's salvation in ears of lost ones. By and by I will shine in the full radiancy of the beauty of Christ, and be among the glorified with my Redeemer." "You, frail, powerless, little one?" I ask; and the answer is, "Yes; Christ and I." And all these blessed possibilities that are in the life of the young person, must go upon the altar in the living sacrifice.

Take another view of it. Some people seem to suppose that only spiritual exercises are included in this living sacrifice; that it does not cover their business, their social life, their amusements. But it really embraces the whole of life. We belong to God as truly on Monday as on the Lord's Day. We must keep ourselves laid on God's altar as really while we are at our week-day work as when we are in a prayer-meeting. We are always on duty as Christians, whether we are engaged in our secular pursuits or in exercises of devotion. All our work should therefore be done reverently, "as unto the Lord."

We should do everything also for God's eye and according to the principles of righteousness. The consecrated mechanic must put absolute truth into every piece of work he does. The consecrated business man must conduct his business on the principles of divine righteousness. The consecrated millionaire must lay his money on God's altar, so that every dollar of it shall do business for God, blessing the world. The consecrated housekeeper must keep her home so sweet and so tidy and beautiful all the days, that she would never be ashamed for her Master to come in without warning to be her guest. That is, when we present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, we are to be God's in every part and in every phase of our life--wherever we go, whatever we do.

"I cannot be of any use," says one. "I cannot talk in meetings. I cannot pray in public. I have no gift for visiting the sick. There is nothing I can do for Christ."

Well, if Christian service were all talking and praying in meetings, and visiting the sick--it would be discouraging to such talentless people. But are our tongues the only faculties we can use for Christ? There are ways in which even silent people can belong to God and be a blessing in the world. A star does not talk--but its calm, steady beam shines down continually out of the sky, and is a benediction to many. A flower cannot sing bird-songs--but its sweet beauty and gentle fragrance make it a blessing wherever it is seen. Be like a star in your peaceful shining, and many will thank God for your life. Be like the flower in your pure beauty and in the influence of your unselfish spirit, and you may do more to bless the world than many who talk incessantly. The living sacrifice does not always mean active work. It may mean the patient endurance of a wrong, the quiet bearing of a pain; or cheerful acquiescence in a disappointment.

There are some people who think it impossible in their narrow sphere and in their uncongenial circumstances, to live so as to win God's favor or be blessings in the world. But there is no doubt that many of the most beautiful lives of earth, in God's sight, are those that are lived in what seem the most unfavorable conditions.

A visitor to Amsterdam wished to hear the wonderful music of the chimes of St. Nicholas, and went up into the tower of the church to hear it. There he found a man with wooden gloves on his hands, pounding on a keyboard. All he could hear was the clanging of the keys when struck by the wooden hammer, and the harsh, deafening noise of the bells close over his head. He wondered why people talked of the marvelous chimes of St. Nicholas. To his ear there was no music in them, nothing but terrible clatter and clanging. Yet, all the while, there floated out over and beyond the city the most entrancing music. Men in the fields paused in their work to listen and were made glad. People in their homes and travelers on the highways were thrilled by the marvelous bell-notes that fell from the chimes.

There are many lives, which to those who dwell close beside them, seem to make no music. They pour out their strength in hard toil. They are shut up in narrow spheres. They dwell amid the noise and clatter of common task-work. They appear to be only striking wooden hammers on rattling, noisy keys. There can be nothing pleasing to God in their life, men would say. They think themselves that they are not of any

use, that no blessing goes out from their life. They never dream that sweet music is made anywhere in the world by their noisy hammering. As the bell-chimer in his little tower hears no music from his own ringing of the bells, so they think of their hard toil as producing nothing but clatter and clangor; but out over the world where the influence goes from their work and character, human lives are blessed, and weary ones hear with gladness sweet, comforting music. Then away off in heaven, where angels listen for earth's melody, most entrancing strains are heard!

No doubt it will be seen at the last--that many of earth's most acceptable living sacrifices have been laid on the altar in the narrowest spheres and in the midst of the hardest conditions. What to the ears of close listeners is only the noise of painful toil is heard in heaven as music as sweet as angels' song.

The living sacrifice is "acceptable unto God." It ought to be a wondrous inspiration to know this; that even the lowliest things we do for Christ are pleasing to him. We ought to be able to do better, truer work, when we think of his gracious acceptance of it. It is told of Leonardo da Vinci, that while still a pupil, before his genius burst into brilliancy, he received a special inspiration in this way: His old and famous master, because of his growing infirmities of age, felt obliged to give up his own work, and one day bade Da Vinci finish for him a picture which he had begun. The young man had such a reverence for his master's skill that he shrank from the task. The old artist, however, would not accept any excuse--but persisted in his command, saying simply, "Do your best."

Da Vinci at last tremblingly seized the brush and kneeling before the easel prayed: "It is for the sake of my beloved master that I implore skill and power for this undertaking." As he proceeded, his hand grew steady, his eye awoke with slumbering genius. He forgot himself and was filled with enthusiasm for his work. When the painting was finished, the old master was carried into the studio to pass judgment on the result. His eye rested on a triumph of art. Throwing his arms about the young artist, he exclaimed, "My son, I paint no more."

There are some who shrink from undertaking the work which the Master gives them to do. They are not worthy; they have no skill or power for the delicate duty. But to all their timid shrinking and withdrawing, the Master's gentle yet urgent word is, "Do your best!" They have only to kneel in lowly reverence and pray, for the beloved Master's sake, for skill and strength for the task assigned, and they will be inspired and helped to do it well. The power of Christ will rest upon them and the love of Christ will be in their heart. And all work done under this blessed inspiration will be acceptable unto God. We have but truly to lay the living sacrifice on the altar; then God will send the fire.

We need to get this matter of "consecration" down out of cloud-land, into the region of actual, common daily living. We sing about it and pray for it and talk of it in our religious meetings, oftentimes in glowing mood, as if it were some exalted state with which earth's life of toil, struggle, and care had nothing whatever to do. But the consecration suggested by the living sacrifice, is one who walks on the earth, who meets life's actual duties, struggles, temptations, and sorrows, and who does not falter in obedience, fidelity, or submission, but that which follows Christ with love and joy--wherever he leads. No other consecration pleases God.

Chapter 3. Christ's Interest in Our Common Life.

One of our Lord's after-resurrection appearances vividly pictures his loving interest in our common toil. While waiting for him to come to Galilee, the disciples had gone back for a time to their old work of fishing. They were poor men, and this was probably necessary in order to provide for their own subsistence. Thus

fishing was the duty that lay nearest to them. Yet it must have been dreary work for them, after the exalted privileges they had enjoyed so long. Think what the last three years had been to these men. Jesus had taken them into the most intimate fellowship with himself--into closest confidential friendship. They had listened to his wonderful words, seen his gracious acts, and witnessed his sweet life. Think what a privilege it was to live thus with Jesus those beautiful years; what glimpses of heaven they had; what visions of radiant life shone before them.

But now this precious experience was ended. The lovely dream had vanished. They were back again at their old work. How dreary it must have been--this tiresome handling of oars and boats and fishing-nets, after their years of exalted life with their Master! But it is a precious thought to us that just at this time, when they were in the midst of the dull and wearisome work, and when they were sadly discouraged, that Christ appeared to them! It showed his interest in their work, his sympathy with them in their discouragement, and his readiness to help them.

The revealings of his appearance that morning, are for all his friends and for all time. We know now that our risen Savior is interested in whatever we have to do, and is ready to help us in all our dull, common life. He will come to his people, not in the church service, the prayer-meeting, the Holy Supper only--but is quite as apt to reveal himself to them in the task-work of the plainest, dullest day.

There are duties in every life, which are irksome. Young people sometimes find school work dull. There are faithful mothers who many a day grow weary of the endless duties of the household. There are good men who tire oftentimes, of the routine of office, or store, or mill, or farm. There comes to most of us, at times, the feeling that what we have to do day after day is not worthy of us. We have had glimpses, or brief experiences, of life in its higher revealings. It may have been a companionship for a season with one above us in experience or attainment, that has lifted us up for a little time into exalted thoughts and feelings, after which it is hard to come back again to the old plodding round, and to the old, uninteresting companionships. It may have been a visit to some place or to some home, with opportunities, refinements, inspirations, privileges, above those which we can have in our own narrower surroundings and plainer home and less congenial intimacies.

Or our circumstances may have been harshly changed by some providence which has broken in upon our happy life. It may have been a death which cut off the income; or a reverse in business which swept away a fortune, and luxury and ease and the material refinements and elegances of wealth have to be exchanged for toil and plain circumstances and a humbler home. There are few sorer tests of character, than such changes as these bring with them. The first thought always is: "How can I go to this dreary life, these hard tasks, this painful drudgery, this weary plodding--after having enjoyed so long the comforts and refinements of my old happy state?"

In such cases immeasurable comfort may be found in this appearance of the risen Christ, that morning on the shore. The disciples took up their dull old work because it was necessary, and was their plain duty for the time; and there was Jesus waiting to greet them and bless them. Accept your hard tasks, and do them cheerfully, no matter how irksome they appear--and Christ will reveal himself to you in them. Be sure that he will never come to you when you are avoiding any tasks, when you are withholding your hand from any duty, or when you are fretting and discontented over any circumstances or conditions of your lot. There are no visions of Christ--for idle dreamers or for unhappy shirkers.

Suppose you have come back, like the disciples, from times of privilege and exaltation, and find yourself face to face once more with an old life which seems now unworthy of you; yet for the time your duty is clear, and if you would have a vision of Christ, you must take up the duty with gladness. Suppose that your home-life is narrow, humdrum, unpoetic, uncongenial, even cold and unkindly; yet there for the time is your place, and there are your duties. And right in this sphere, narrow though it seem, there is room for holiest visions of Christ and for the richest revealings of his grace and blessing!

It will be remembered that Jesus himself, after his glimpse of higher things in the temple, went back to the lowly peasant home at Nazareth, and there for eighteen years more found scope enough for the development of the richest nature this world ever saw, and for the fullest and completest doing of duty ever wrought beneath the skies. Whatever, then, may be our shrinking from dull tasks, our distaste for dreary duty, our discontent with a narrow place and with limiting circumstances, we should go promptly to the work that God assigns, and accept the conditions which lie in the lot which he appoints. And in our hardest toil, our most irksome tasks, our lowliest duties, our dreariest and most uncongenial surroundings, we shall have but to lift up our eyes to see the blessed form of Christ standing before us, with cheer, sympathy, and encouragement for us!

There is more of the lesson. Not only did Christ reveal himself to these disciples while at their lowly work--but he helped them in it. He told them where to cast their net, and turned their failure to success. We think of Christ as helping us to endure temptation, to bear trial, to overcome sin, to do spiritual duties--but we sometimes forget that he is just as ready to help us in our common work. That morning he helped the disciples in their fishing. He will help us in our trade or business, or in whatever work we have to do.

We all have our discouraged days, when things do not go well. The young people fail in their lessons at school, although they have studied hard, and really have done their best. Or the mothers fail in their household work. The children are hard to control. It has been impossible to keep good temper, to maintain that sweetness and lovingness which is so essential to a happy day. They try to be gentle, kindly, and patient--but, try as they will, their minds become ruffled and fretted with cares! They come to the close of the long, unhappy hours disturbed, defeated, discouraged. They have done their best--but they feel that they have only failed. They fall upon their knees--but they have only tears for a prayer. Yet if they will lift up their eyes, they will see on the shore of the troubled sea of their little day's life--the form of One whose presence will give them strength and confidence, and who will help them to victoriousness. Before his sweet smile, the shadows flee away. At his word, new strength is given, and, after that, work is easy, and all goes well again.

Men, too, in their busy life, are continually called to struggle, oftentimes to suffer. Life is not easy for any who would live godly. Work is hard; burdens are heavy; responsibility is great; trials are sore; duty is large. Life's competitions are fierce; its rivalries are keen; its frictions sometimes grind men's very souls well near to death. It is hard to live sweetly amid the irritations that touch continually at most tender points. It is hard to live lovingly and charitably when they see so much inequity and wrong, and sometimes must themselves endure men's uncharity and injustice. It is hard to toil and never rest, earning even then, scarcely enough to feed and clothe those who are dependent on them for care. It is hard to meet temptation's fierce assaults, and keep themselves pure, unspotted from the world, ready for heaven any hour the Lord may come.

It is no wonder that men are sometimes discouraged and lose heart. They are like those weary disciples that spring morning on the Sea of Galilee, after they had toiled all night and had taken nothing. But let us

not forget the vision that awaited these disciples with the coming of the dawn--the risen Jesus standing on the shore with his salutation of love and his strong help that instantly turned failure into blessing. So over against every tempted, struggling, toiling life of Christian disciple, Christ is ever standing, ready to give victory and to guide to highest good.

Life would be easier for us--if we could realize the presence and actual help of Christ in all life's experiences. We need to care for only one thing--that we may be faithful always to duty, and loyal to our Master. Then, the duller the round and the sorer the struggle--the surer we shall ever be of Christ's smile and help. We may glory in infirmities, because then the power of God rests upon us.

It is not ordinarily in the easy ways, in the luxurious surroundings, in the paths of worldly honor, in the congenial lot--that the brightest heavenly visions are seen. There have been more blessed revealings of Christ in prisons than in palaces; in homes of poverty than in homes of abundance; in ways of hardship than in ways of ease. We need only to accept our task-work, our drudgery, our toil, in Christ's name--and the glory of Christ will transfigure it and shine upon our faces.

Chapter 4. The Possibilities of Prayer.

We do not begin to realize the possibilities of prayer. There is no limit, for example, to the scope of prayer. We may embrace in it all things that belong to our life--not merely those which affect our spiritual interests--but those as well which seem to be only temporal matters. Nothing which concerns us in any way--is matter of indifference to God. One writes: "Learn to entwine with your prayers--the small cares, the trifling sorrows, the little needs of daily life. Whatever affects you--be it a changed look, an altered tone, an unkind word, a wrong, a wound, a demand you cannot meet, a sorrow you cannot disclose--turn it into prayer and send it up to God! Disclosures you may not make to man--you can make to the Lord. Men may be too little for your great matters; God is not too great for your small ones. Only give yourself to prayer, whatever be the occasion that calls for it."

We soon find, however, if we are really earnest, that our desires are too great for words. We have in our hearts feelings, hungerings, affections, longings, which we want to breathe out to God; but when we begin to speak to him, we find no language adequate for their expression. We try to tell God of our sorrow for sin, of our weakness and sinfulness; of our desire to be better, to love Christ more, to follow him more closely, and of our hunger after righteousness, after holiness; but it is very little of these deep cravings that we can get into speech.

Language is a wonderful gift. The power of putting into words the thoughts and emotions of our souls, that others may understand them, is one of the most marvelous powers the Creator has bestowed upon us. Thus we communicate our feelings and desires, from one to the other. It is a sore deprivation when the gates of speech are shut and locked, and when the soul cannot tell its thoughts.

Yet we all know, unless our thoughts and feelings are very shallow and trivial, that even the wonderful faculty of language is inadequate to express all that the soul can experience. No true orator ever finds sentences majestic enough to interpret the sentiments that burn in his soul. Deep, pure love is never able to put into words its most sacred feelings and emotions. It is only the commonplace of the inner life that can be uttered in even the finest language. There is always more that lies back, unexpressed, than is spoken in any words.

It is specially true of prayer--that we cannot utter its deepest feelings and holiest desires. We have comfort, however, in the assurance that God can hear thoughts. He knows what we want to say and cannot express. Your dearest friend may stand close to you when your mind is full of thoughts--but unless you speak or give some sign, he cannot know one of your thoughts. He may lay his ear close to your heart, and he will hear its throbbings; but he cannot hear your feelings, your desires. Yet God knows all that goes on in your soul. Every thought which flies through your brain, is heard in heaven.

"O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord." Psalm 139:1-4

We need not trouble ourselves, therefore, if we cannot get our wishes into words when we pray, for God hears wishes, heart-longings, soul hungerings and thirstings. The things we cannot say in speech of the lips, we may ask God to take from our heart's speech. There is not the feeblest, faintest glimmer of a desire rising on the far-away horizon of our being--but God sees it. There is not a heart-hunger, not a wish to be holier and better, not an aspiration to be more Christ-like, not a craving to live for God and be a blessing to others, not the faintest desire to be rid of sin's power--but God knows of it. Paul has a wonderful word on this subject: God, he says, "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." When our heart is stirred to its depths, what large, great things can we ask in words? Then, how much can we put into thoughts of prayer, into longings, desires, aspirations, beyond the possibilities of speech? God can do more than we can pray, either in words or thoughts.

Our truest praying is that which we cannot express in any words, our heart's unutterable longings, when we sit at God's feet and look up into his face and do not speak at all--but let our hearts talk.

Our best, truest prayers are not for earthly things--but for spiritual blessings. When the objects are temporal, we do not know what we should pray for--what would be really a blessing to us. You are a loving parent, and your child is very ill. It seems that it must die. You fall upon your knees before God to pray--but you do not know what to ask. Your breaking heart would quickly plead, "Lord, spare my precious child"; but you do not know that that is best. Perhaps to live would not be God's sweetest gift to your child, or to you. So, not daring to choose, you can only say, "Lord God, I cannot speak more; but you know your child; you understand what is best."

Or, some plan of yours, which you have long cherished, seems about to be thwarted. You go to God, and begin to pray; but you do not know what to ask. You can only say, "Lord, I cannot tell what is best; but you know." What a comfort it is that God does indeed know, and that we may safely leave our heart's burden in his hand, without any request whatever!

We can do little more than this, in any request for temporal things. Says Farrar: "There are two things to remember about prayers for earthly things: One, that to ask mainly for earthly blessings is a dreadful dwarfing and vulgarization of the grandeur of prayer, as though you asked for a handful of grass, when you might ask for a handful of emeralds; the other that you must always ask for earthly desires with absolute submission of your own will to God's." So silence is oft-times the best and truest praying--bowing before God in life's great crises; but saying nothing, leaving the burden in God's hand without any of your own choosing. We are always safe when we let God guide us in all our ways.

Many of the richest possibilities of prayer, lie beyond valleys of pain and sorrow. The best things of life cannot be gotten, but at sore cost. When we pray for more holiness, we do not know what we are asking for; at least we do not know the price we must pay to get that which we ask. Our "Nearer, my God, to Thee," must be conditioned by, and often can come only through, "Even though it be a cross--that raises me."

Not only are the spiritual things the best things--but many times the spiritual things can be grasped only by letting go and losing out of our hands those earthly things we would love to keep. God loves us too much to grant our prayers for comfort and relief--if he can do it only at spiritual loss to us. He would rather let it be hard for us to live if there is blessing in the hardness, than make it easy for us at the cost of the blessing.

There are certain singing-birds that never learn to sing--until their cages are darkened. Would it be true kindness to keep these birds always in the sunshine? There are human hearts that never learn to sing the song of faith and peace and love--until they enter the darkness of trial. Would it be true love for these if God would hear their prayers for the removal of their pain? We dare not plead, therefore, but with utmost self-distrust and submission, that God would remove the cross of suffering.

Does God answer prayers? "I have been praying for one thing for years," says one, "and it has not come yet." God has many ways of answering. Sometimes he delays that he may give a better, fuller answer. A poor woman stood at a vineyard gate, and looked over into the vineyard. "Would you like some grapes?" asked the proprietor, who was within. "I would be very thankful," replied the woman. "Then bring your basket." Quickly the basket was brought to the gate and passed in. The owner took it and was gone a long time among the vines, until the woman became discouraged, thinking he was not coming again. At last he returned with the basket heaped full. "I have made you wait a good while," he said, "but you know the longer you have to wait, the better grapes and the more."

So it sometimes is in prayer. We bring our empty vessel to God--and pass it over the gate of prayer to him. He seems to be delaying a long time, and sometimes faith faints with waiting. But at last he comes, and our basket is heaped full with luscious blessings! He waited long that he might bring us a better and a fuller answer. At least we are sure that no true prayer ever really goes unanswered. We have to wait for the fruits to ripen--and that takes time! Sometimes God delays--until some work in us is finished.

Chapter 5. Getting Christ's Touch.

There was wonderful power in the touch of Christ, when he was on the earth. Wherever he laid his hand, he left a blessing--and sick, sad, and weary ones received health, comfort, and peace. That hand, glorified, now holds in its clasp the seven stars. Yet there are senses in which the blessed touch of Christ is felt yet on men's lives. He is as really in this world today, as he was when he walked in human form through Judea and Galilee. His hand is yet laid on his weary, suffering, sorrowing people, and, though its pressure is unfelt, its power to bless is the same as in the ancient days. It is laid on the sick, when precious heavenly words of cheer and encouragement from the Scriptures are read at their bedside, giving them the blessing of sweet patience, and quieting their fears. It is laid on the sorrowing, when the consolations of divine love come to their hearts with tender comfort, giving them strength to submit to God's will and rejoice in the midst of trial. It is laid on the faint and weary, when the grace of Christ comes to them with its holy peace, hushing the wild tumult, and giving true rest of soul.

But there is another way in which the hand of Christ is laid on human lives. He sends his disciples into the world to represent him. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you," is his own word. Of course the best and holiest Christian life--can be only the dimmest, faintest reproduction of the rich, full, blessed life of Christ. Yet it is in this way, through these earthen vessels, that he has ordained to save the world, and to heal, help, comfort, lift up, and build up men.

Perhaps in thinking of what God does for the world, we are too apt to overlook the human agents and instruments, and to think of him touching lives directly and immediately. A friend of ours is in sorrow, and, going to our knees, we pray to God to give him comfort. But may it not be that he would send the comfort through our own heart and lips? One we love is not doing well, is drifting away from a true life, is in danger of being lost. In anguish of heart we cry to God, beseeching him to lay his hand on the imperilled life, and rescue it. But may it not be that ours is the hand that must be stretched out in love, and laid, in Christ's name, on the life that is in danger?

Certain it is, at least, that each one of us who knows the love of Christ, is ordained to be as Christ to others; that is, to be the messenger to carry to them the gift of Christ's grace and help, and to show to them the spirit of Christ, the patience, gentleness, thoughtfulness, love, and yearning of Christ. We are taught to say, "Christ lives in me." If this is true, Christ would love others through us, and our touch must be to others as the very touch of Christ himself. Every Christian ought to be, in his measure, a new incarnation of the Christ, so that people shall say: "He interprets Christ to me! He comforts me in my sorrow--as Christ himself would do if he were to come and sit down beside me! He is as hopeful and patient as Christ would be--if he were to return and take me as his disciple."

But before we can be in the place of Christ to sorrowing, suffering, and struggling ones--we must have that mind in us, which was in him. When Paul said, "The love of Christ constrains me," he meant that he had the very love of Christ in him--the love which loved even the most unlovely, which helped even the most unworthy, which was gentle and affectionate even to the most loathsome. We are never ready to do good in the world, in the truest sense or in any large measure--until we have become thus filled with the very spirit of Christ! We may help people in a certain way, without loving them. We may render them services of a certain kind, benefitting them externally or temporally. We may put material gifts into their hands, build them houses, purchase clothing for them, carry them bread, or improve their circumstances and condition. We may thus do many things for them--without having in our heart any love for them. This is nothing better than common philanthropy. But the highest and most real help we can give them, only through sincerely loving them.

"When I have attempted," says Emerson, "to give myself to others by services, it proved an intellectual trick--no more. They eat your services like apples, and leave you out. But love them, and they feel you and delight in you all the time." When we love others, we can help them in all deep and true ways. We can put blessings into their hearts instead of merely into their hands. We can enter into their very being, becoming new breath of life to them--quicken and inspiring them.

There is a touching and very suggestive story of a good woman in Sweden, who opened a home for crippled and diseased children--children for whom no one else was ready to care. In due time she received into her home about twenty of these unfortunate little ones. Among them was a boy of three years, who was a most frightful and disagreeable object. He resembled a skeleton. His skin was covered with hideous blotches and sores. He was always whining and crying. This poor little fellow gave the good lady more care and trouble than all the others together. She did her best for him, and was as kind as

possible--washed him, fed him, nursed him. But the child was so repulsive in his looks and ways, that, try as she would, she could not bring herself to like him, and often her disgust would show itself in her face in spite of her effort to hide it. She could not really love the child.

One day she was sitting on the veranda steps with this child in her arms. The sun was shining brightly, and the perfume of the autumn honeysuckles, the chirping of the birds, and the buzzing of the insects, lulled her into a sort of sleep. Then in a half-waking, half-dreaming state, she thought of herself as having changed places with the child, and as lying there, only more foul, more repulsive in her sinfulness than he was.

Over her she saw the Lord Jesus bending, looking lovingly into her face, yet with an expression of gentle rebuke in his eye, as if he meant to say, "If I can bear with you who are so full of sin, surely you ought, for my sake, to love that innocent child who suffers for the sin of his parents."

She woke up with a sudden startle, and looked into the boy's face. He had waked, too, and was looking very earnestly into her face. Sorry for her past disgust, and feeling in her heart a new compassion for him, she bent her face to his, and kissed him as tenderly as ever she had kissed a babe of her own. With a startled look in his eyes, and a flush on his cheek, the boy gave her back a smile so sweet that she had never seen one like it before. From that moment a wonderful change came over the child. He understood the new affection that had come--instead of dislike and loathing in the woman's heart. That touch of human love transformed his peevish, fretful nature into gentle quiet and beauty. The woman had seen a vision of herself in that blotched, repulsive child, and of Christ's wonderful love for her in spite of her sinfulness. Under the inspiration of this vision she had become indeed as Christ to the child. The love of Christ had come into her heart, and was pouring through her upon that poor, wretched, wronged life.

Christ loves the unlovely, the deformed, the loathsome, the leprous. We have only to think of ourselves as we are in his sight, and then remember that, in spite of all the moral and spiritual loathsomeness in us--he yet loves us, does not shrink from us, lays his hand upon us to heal us, takes us into most intimate companionship with himself. This Christian woman had seen a vision of herself, and of Christ loving her still and condescending to bless and save her; and now she was ready to be as Christ, to show the spirit of Christ, to be the pity and the love of Christ to this poor, loathsome child lying on her knee.

She had gotten the touch of Christ by getting the love of Christ into her heart. And we can get it in no other way. We must see ourselves as Christ's servants, sent by him to be to others--what he is to us. Then shall we be fitted to be a blessing to every life which our life touches. Our words then shall throb with love, and find their way to the hearts of the weary and sorrowing. Then there will be a sympathetic quality in our life, which shall give a strange power of helpfulness to whatever we do.

Says a thoughtful writer, speaking of influence: "Let a man press nearer to Christ, and open his nature more widely to admit the power of Christ, and, whether he knows it or not--it is better, perhaps, if he does not know it--he will certainly be growing in power for God with men, and for men with God." We get power for Christ--only as we become filled with the very life of Christ!

Everywhere about us--there are lives, cold, and cheerless, and dull, which by the touch of our hand, in loving warmth, in Christ's name, would be wondrously blessed and transformed. Someone tells of going into a jeweler's store to look at certain gems. Among other stones he was shown an opal. As it lay there, however, it appeared dull and altogether lustreless. Then the jeweler took it in his hand and held it for some moments, and again showed it to his customer. Now it gleamed and flashed with all the glories of

the rainbow. It needed the touch and warmth of a human hand to bring out its iridescence. There are human lives everywhere about us that are rich in their possibilities of beauty and glory. No gems or jewels are so precious; but as we see them in their earthly condition they are dull and lustreless, without brightness or loveliness. Perhaps they are even covered with stain by sin. Yet they need only the touch of the hand of Christ--to bring out the radiance, the loveliness, the beauty of the divine image in them. And you and I must be the hand of Christ to these lusterless or stained lives! Touching them with our warm love, the sleeping splendor which is in them, hidden perhaps under sin's marring and ruin, will yet shine out--the beginning of glory for them!

Chapter 6. The Blessing of a Burden.

It is not always the easiest things--which are the best things. Usually we have to pay a high price, for any good thing. In all markets, commodities which cost little may be set down as worth but little. All our blessings may be rated in the same way. If they come easily, without great cost of effort or sacrifice, their value to us is not great. But if we can get them only through self-denial, tears, anguish, and pain--we may be sure that they hide in them the very gold of God. So it is that many of our best and richest blessings come to us in some form of rugged hardness.

Take what we call drudgery. Life is full of it. It begins in childhood. There is school, with its set hours, its lessons, rules, tables, tasks, recitations. Then, when we grow up, instead of getting away from this bondage of routine, this interminable drudgery, it goes on just as in childhood. It is rising at the same hour every morning, and hurrying away to the day's tasks, and doing the same things over and over, six days in the week, fifty-two weeks in the year, and on and on unto life's end. For the great majority of us, there is almost no break in the monotonous rounds of our days through the long years. Many of us sigh and wish we might in some way free ourselves from this endless routine. We think of it as a sore bondage and by no means the ideal of a noble and beautiful life.

But really, much that is best in life comes out of this very bondage to drudgery. A recent writer suggests a new beatitude: "Blessed be drudgery." He reminds us that no Bible beatitude comes easily--but that every one of them is the fruit of some experience of hardness or pain. He shows us that life's drudgery, wearisome and disagreeable as it is, yields rich treasures of good and blessing. Drudgery, he tells us, is the secret of all culture. He names as fundamentals in a strong, fine character, "power of attention; power of industry; promptitude in beginning work; method, accuracy, and adroitness in doing work; perseverance; courage before difficulties; cheer under straining burdens; self-control; self-denial; temperance"; and claims that nowhere else can these qualities be gotten--but in the unending grind and pressure of those routine duties which we call drudgery. "It is because we have to go, morning after morning, through rain, through shine, through headache, heartache--to the appointed spot and do the appointed work; because, and only because, we have to stick to that work through the eight or ten hours, long after rest would be so sweet; because the school-boy's lessons must be learned at nine o'clock, and learned without a slip; because the accounts on the ledger must square to a cent; because the goods must tally exactly with the invoice; because good temper must be kept with children, customers, neighbors, not seven times--but seventy times seven; because the besetting sin must be watched today, tomorrow, next day; in short--it is because, and only because, of the rut, plod, grind, hum-drum in the work--that we get at last those self-foundations laid," which are essential to all noble character.

So there is a blessing for us in the commonest, wearisomest task-work of our lives. "Blessed be drudgery" is truly a beatitude. We all need the discipline of this tireless plodding, to build us up into beautiful

character. Even the loveliest flowers must have their roots in common earth; so, many of the sweetest things in human lives grow out of the soil of drudgery. "Be O man, like unto the rose. Its root is indeed in dirt and mud--but its flowers still send forth grace and perfume."

Take again life's struggles and conflicts. There are, in the experience of each one, obstacles, hindrances, and difficulties, which make it hard to live successfully. Everyone has to move onward and upward through ranks of resistances. This is true of physical life. Every baby that is born, begins at once a struggle for existence. To be victorious and live--or to succumb and die? is the question of every cradle, and only half the babies born reach their teens. After that, until its close, life is a continuous struggle with the manifold forms of physical infirmity. If we live to be old, it must be through our victoriousness over the unceasing antagonism of accident and disease.

The same is true in mental progress. It must be made against resistance. It is never easy to become a scholar or to attain intellectual culture. It takes years and years of study and discipline to draw out and train the faculties of the mind. An indolent, self-indulgent student may have an easy time; he never troubles himself with difficult problems; he lets the hard things pass, not vexing his brain with them. But in evading the burden--he misses the blessing that was in it for him. The only path to the joys and rewards of scholarship is that of patient, persistent toil.

It is true also in spiritual life. We enter a world of antagonism and opposition the moment we resolve at Christ's feet, to be Christians, to be true men or women, to forsake sin, to obey God, to do our duty. There never comes a day when we can live nobly and worthily without effort, without resistance to wrong influences, without struggle against the power of temptation. It never gets easy to be godly. Evermore the cross lies at our feet, and daily it must be taken up and carried, if we would follow Christ. We are apt to grow weary of this unending struggle, and to become discouraged, because there is neither rest nor abatement in it.

But here again we learn that it is out of just such struggles that we must get the nobleness and beauty of character, after which we are striving. This is the universal law of spiritual growth. There must be resistance, struggle, conflict--or there can be no development of strength. We are inclined to pity those whose lives are scenes of toil and hardship--but God does not pity them, if only they are victorious; for in their overcoming they are climbing daily upward toward the holy heights of sainthood. The beatitudes in the Apocalypse are all for over-comers. Heaven's rewards and crowns lie beyond battle-plains. Spiritual life always needs opposition. It flourishes most luxuriantly in adverse circumstances. We grow best under afflictions. We find our richest blessings--in the burdens we dread to take up.

The word "character" in its origin is suggestive. It is from a root which signifies to engrave, to cut into furrows. In life, therefore, it is that which experiences cut or furrow in the soul. A baby has no character. Its life is like a piece of white paper, with nothing yet written upon it; or it is like a smooth marble tablet, on which, as yet, the sculptor has cut nothing; or the canvas, waiting for the painter's colors. Character is formed as the years go on. It is the writing--the song, the story, put upon the paper. It is the engraving, the sculpturing, which the marble receives under the chisel. It is the picture which the artist paints on the canvas. Final character is what a man is, when he has lived through all his earthly years. In the Christian it is the lines of the likeness of Christ engraved, sometimes furrowed and scarred, upon his soul by the divine Spirit through the means of grace and the experiences of his own life.

I saw a beautiful vase, and asked its story. Once it was a lump of common clay lying in the darkness. Then it was harshly dug out and crushed and ground in the mill, and then put upon the wheel and shaped, then polished and tinted and put into the furnace and burned. At last, after many processes, it stood upon the table--a gem of graceful beauty. In some way analogous to this, every noble character is formed. Common clay at first, it passes through a thousand processes and experiences, many of them hard and painful, until at length it is presented before God, faultless in its beauty, bearing the features of Christ himself.

Spiritual beauty never can be reached without cost. The blessing is always hidden away in the burden, and can be gotten only by lifting the burden. Self must die if the good in us is to live and shine out in radiance. Michael Angelo used to say, as the chippings flew thick from the marble on the floor of his studio, "While the marble wastes, the image grows." There must be a wasting of self, a chipping away continually of things that are dear to nature, if the things that are true, and just, and honorable, and pure, and lovely, are to come out in the life. The marble must waste, while the image grows.

Then take suffering. Here, too, the same law prevails. Everyone suffers. Said Augustine, "God had one Son without sin--but none without sorrow." From infancy's first cry until the old man's life goes out in a gasp of pain, suffering is a condition of existence. It comes in manifold forms. Now it is in sickness; the body is racked with pain or burns in fever. Ofttimes sickness is a heavy burden. Yet even this burden has a blessing in it for the Christian. Sickness rightly borne, makes us better. It unbinds the world's fetters. It purifies the heart. It sobers the spirit. It turns the eyes heavenward. It strips off much of the illusion of life and uncovers its better realities. Sickness in a home of faith, prayer, and love, softens all the household hearts, makes sympathy deeper, and draws all the family closer together.

Trouble comes in many other forms. It may be a bitter disappointment which falls upon a young life when love has not been true, or when character has proved unworthy, turning the fair blossoms of hope, to dead leaves under the feet. There are lives that bear the pain and carry the hidden memorials of such a grief through long years, making them sad at heart even when walking in sweetest sunshine.

Or it may be the failure of some other hope, as when one has followed a bright dream of ambition for days and years, finding it only a dream. Or it may be the keener, more bitter grief which comes to one when a friend--a child, a brother or sister, a husband or wife--fails badly. In such a case even the divine comfort cannot heal the heart's hurt; love cannot but suffer, and there is no hand that can lessen the pang. The anguish which love endures for others' sins is among the saddest of earth's sorrows.

There are griefs which wear no black garments, which close no shutters, which drop no tears which men can see, which can get no sympathy--but that of the blessed Christ and perhaps of a closest human brother, and must wear smiles before men and go on with life's work as if all were gladness within the heart. If we knew the inner life of many of the people we meet, we would be very gentle with them and would excuse the things in them that seem strange or eccentric to us. They are carrying burdens of secret grief. We cannot begin to know the sorrows of others.

There is no need to try to solve that old, yet always new, question of human hearts, "Why does God permit so much suffering in his children?" It is idle to ask this question, and all efforts at answering it are not only vain--but they are even irreverent. We may be sure, however, of one thing, that in every pain and trial, there is a blessing folded. We may miss it--but it is there, and the loss is ours if we do not get it. Every night of sorrow carries in its dark bosom, its own lamps of comfort. The darkness of grief and trial is full of benedictions.

The most blessed lives in the world are those that have borne the burden of suffering. "Where, think you," asks James Martineau, "does the Heavenly Father hear the tones of deepest love, and see on the uplifted face the light of most heartfelt gratitude? Not where his gifts are most profuse--but where they are most meager; not within the halls of successful ambition, or even in the dwellings of unbroken domestic peace; but where the outcast, flying from persecution, kneels in the evening on the rocks whereon he sleeps; at the fresh grave, where, as the earth is opened, heaven in answer opens too; by the pillow of the wasted sufferer, where the sunken eye, denied sleep, converses with the silent stars, and the hollow voice enumerates in low prayer the scanty list of comforts, the easily remembered blessings, and the shortened tale of hopes. Genial, almost to a miracle, is the soil of sorrow, wherein the smallest seed of love, timely falling, becomes a tree, in whose foliage the birds of blessed song lodge and sing unceasingly."

The truly happiest, sweetest, tenderest homes are not those where there has been no sorrow--but those which have been overshadowed with grief, and where Christ's comfort was accepted. The very memory of the sorrow is a gentle benediction that broods ever over the household, like the afterglow of sunset, like the silence that comes after prayer.

In every burden of sorrow, there is a blessing sent from God, which we ought not to thrust away. In one of the battles of the Crimea, a cannon-ball gashed the earth and sadly marring the garden beauty of the place. But from the ugly chasm there burst forth a spring of water, which flowed on thereafter, a living fountain. So the strokes of sorrow gash our hearts, leaving oftentimes wounds and scars--but they open for us fountains of rich blessing and of new life.

These are hints of the blessings of burdens. Our dull task-work, accepted, will train us into strong and noble character. Our temptations and hardships, met victoriously, knit muscles and sinews of strength in our souls. Our pain and sorrow, endured with sweet trust and submission, leave us with life purified and enriched, with more of Christ in us. In every burden that God lays upon us, there is a blessing for us, if only we will take it.

Chapter 7. Heart-peace Before Ministry.

Peace in the heart is one of the conditions of good work. We cannot do our best in anything if we are fretted and anxious. A feverish heart makes an inflamed brain, a clouded eye, and an unsteady hand. The people who really accomplish the most, and achieve the best results, are those of calm, self-controlled spirit. Those who are nervous and excited may be always busy, and always under pressure of haste; but in the end they do far less work than if they wrought calmly and steadily, and were never in a hurry.

Nervous haste is always hindering haste. It does faulty work, and does but little of it in the end. Really rapid workers are always deliberate in their movements, never appearing to be in any hurry whatever; and yet they pass swiftly from task to task, doing each duty well because they are calm and unflustered, and, with their wits about them, work with clear eye, steady nerve, and skillful hand.

An eminent French surgeon used to say to his students, when they were engaged in difficult and delicate operations, in which coolness and firmness were needed, "Gentlemen, don't be in a hurry; for there's no time to lose."

The people in all lines of duty who do the most work are the calmest, most unhurried people in the community. Duties never wildly chase each other in their lives. One task never crowds another out, nor ever compels hurried, and therefore imperfect, doing. The calm spirit works methodically, doing one thing

at a time, and doing it well; and it therefore works swiftly, though never appearing to be in haste.

We need the peace of God in our heart, just as really for the doing well of the little things of our secular life--as for the doing of the greatest duties of Christ's kingdom. Our f

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