

The Every Day of Life - Part 1

by J.R. Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the everyday, ordinary days in our lives, and how they reveal our true character, and encourages us to put the glory of love, best effort, sacrifice, prayer, and upward-looking into our daily routine to make it more radiant and beautiful.

Scripture: Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Everyday Faithfulness", "Finding God in the Ordinary"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the significance of the everyday moments in life, arguing that they reveal true character more than extraordinary events. He suggests that while many can shine on special occasions, it is the consistent faithfulness in mundane tasks that truly reflects one's inner life. Miller encourages listeners to find beauty and purpose in the routine, asserting that the quiet, humble acts of love and service are what ultimately enrich the world. He reminds us that God's presence and glory can be found in the ordinary, urging us to appreciate the daily blessings that often go unnoticed.

Transcript

The Every Day of Life

J. R. Miller, 1892

The every-day of life

Perhaps the every-day of life is not so interesting, as are some of the bright particular days. It is apt to be somewhat monotonous. It is just like a great many other days. It has nothing special to mark it. It wears no star on its brow. It is illuminated by no brilliant event. It bears no record of any brave or noble deed done. It is not made memorable by the coming of any new experience into the life--a new hope, a new friendship, a new joy, and a new success. It is not even touched with sorrow, and made to stand out ever after among the days--sad with the memory of loss. It is only a plain, common day, with just the same old wearisome routine of tasks and duties and happenings, which have come so often before.

Yet it is the every-day which is really the best measure and the test of life. Anybody can do well on special occasions. Anybody can be good--on Sundays. Anybody can be bright and cheerful--in exhilarating society. Anybody can be sweet--amid gentle influences. Anybody can make an isolated self-denial--for some conspicuous object; or do a generous deed--under the impulse of some unusual emotion. Anybody

can do a heroic thing--once or twice in a lifetime.

These are beautiful things. They shine like lofty peaks above life's plains. But the ordinary attainment of the common days--is a truer index of the life, a truer measure of its character and value--than are the most striking and brilliant things of its exalted moments. It requires more strength to be faithful in the ninety-nine commonplace duties, when no one is looking on, when there is no special motive to stir the soul to its best effort--than it does in the one duty, which by its unusual importance, or by its conspicuousness, arouses enthusiasm for its own doing. It is a great deal easier to be brave in one stern conflict which calls for heroism, in which large interests are involved--than to be brave in the thousand little struggles of the common days, for which it seems scarcely worth while to put on the armor. It is very much less a task to be good-natured under one great provocation, in the presence of others--than it is to keep sweet temper month after month of ordinary days, amid the frictions, strife's, and petty annoyances and cares of home-life, or of business life.

Thus it is, that one's every-day life is a surer revealer of character than one's public acts. There are men who are magnificent when they appear on great occasions--wise, eloquent, masterly--but who are almost utterly unendurable in their fretfulness, unreasonableness, irascibility, and all manner of selfish disagreeableness in the privacy of their own homes--to those whom they ought to show all of love's gentleness and sweetness! There are women, too, who shine with wondrous brilliancy in society, sparkling in conversation, winning in manner, always the center of admiring groups, resistless in their charms--but who, in their every-day life, in the presence of only their own households--are the dullest and wearisomest of mortals! No doubt in these cases, the common every-day, unflattering as it is--is a truer expression of the inner life--than the hour or two of greatness or graciousness in the blaze of the public.

On the other hand, there are men who are never heard of on the street, whose names never appear in the newspapers, who do no great conspicuous things, whose lives have no glittering peaks towering high--and yet the level plain of their years--is rich in its beauty and its fruitfulness of love. There are women who are the idols of no drawing-rooms, who attract no throngs of admirers about them by resistless charms--but who, in their own quiet sheltered world--do their daily tasks with faithfulness, move in ways of humble duty and quiet cheerfulness, and pour out their heart's pure love, like fragrance, on all about them. Who will say that the uneventful and un-praised every-day of these humble ones--is not radiant in God's sight, though they "Leave no memorial--but a world made a little better by their lives"?

It is in the every-day of life that nearly all the world's best work is done. The tall mountain peaks lift their glittering crests into the clouds, and win attention and admiration; but it is in the great valleys and broad plains that the harvests grow and the fruits ripen, on which the millions of earth feed their hunger. So it is not from the few conspicuous deeds of life that the blessings chiefly come, which make the world, better, sweeter, happier--but from the countless humble services of the every-days, the little faithfulnesses which fill long years.

There are millions of faithful lives that yet go un-praised among men and women. The things they do are not the same in all--but the spirit is the same. These humble ones keep the light of love burning where it guides and cheers and blesses others. By the simple beauty of their own lives, by their quiet deeds of self-sacrifice, by the songs of their cheerful faith, and by the ministries of their helpful hands, they make one little spot of this sad earth brighter and happier.

Lowell's picture of womanly grace and faithfulness is very beautiful, and illustrates the glory of the commonplace--We could lose out of this world, many of its few brilliant deeds--and not be much the poorer; but to lose the uncoun­ted faithfulness of the millions of common lives, would leave this world a cold and dreary place indeed in which to live.

There ought to be both cheer and instruction in these glimpses of the glory and blessing of the every-day of life. Most of us can expect to do only plain and commonplace things. Only a few people can become famous. Only a rare deed now and then--can have its honor proclaimed from the hilltops.

The light of popular praise, at the most, can brighten only a day or two in a lifetime. It is a comfort to reflect that it is the common life of the every-day, that in God's sight is the truest and the best, and that does the most to bless the world. Many of us need the inspiration, which comes from this revealing. The glamour of the conspicuous is apt to deceive us. There is so much exaltation of the unusual and the phenomenal, that we come to think the common as of but small importance.

People, whose days are all alike in their dull routine, feel that their life is scarcely worth living. If only they could do something startling or sublime, or even sensational, to lift them out of the dreary commonplace of their every-days, they would feel that they were living nobly and worthy. But if they could realize that it is by its moral value, that life's worth is measured--they would know that there is ten times more true nobleness in long unbroken years of simple faithfulness, without distinction or conspicuousness at any point--than there is in any unusual brilliancy in an occasional day or hour.

The every-day of God's care and revealing is also more to us than his day of wonder-working. The miracles of Christ were not half so rich in blessing for men--as his common days with their sweet life, their simple teachings, their ceaseless ministries of good, their compassion, their thoughtfulness, comfort, and helpfulness. Daily providence, with its unrecognized wonders of sunshine and air and rain and snow and heat and cold, and its un­failing gifts of food and clothing and beauty and comfort--is more glorious than the occasional startling events which seem to unveil the very throne of God.

Luther wrote one day in a dark period of the Reformation, when even the boldest were trembling: "I recently saw two miracles. You listen to hear of something startling, some great light burning in the heavens, some angelic visitation, some unusual occurrence; but you hear only this: 'As I was at my window, I saw the stars, and that vast and glorious sky in which the Lord has placed them. I could nowhere discover the columns on which the Master has supported this immense vault, and yet the heavens did not fall.' And here was the other miracle: 'I beheld clouds hanging above me like a vast sea. I could neither perceive ground on which they were suspended, and yet they did not fall upon me.'"

If we had eyes to see the glory of the Lord in the every-day of divine providence, we would find light and comfort a thousand times where now we walk in darkness with sorrow un­comforted. The glory of the Lord is everywhere. It shines in the lowliest flower, in the commonest grass-blade, in every drop of dew, in every snowflake. It burns in every bush and tree. It lives in every sunbeam, in every passing cloud. It flows around us in the goodness of each bright day, in the shelter and protection of every dark night. Yet how few of us see this glory. We walk amid the divine splendors, and see oftentimes nothing of the brightness.

We cry out for visions of God, when, if our eyes were opened--we would see God's face mirrored in all about us! There is a legend of one who traveled many years and over many lands, seeking God--but seeking in vain. Then, returning home, and taking up her daily duties, God appeared to her in these, showing her that he was ever close beside her.

God's glory is everywhere--if only we have eyes to see it. The humblest lot affords room enough for the noblest living. There is opportunity in the most common-place life for splendid heroism's, for higher than angelic ministries, for fullest and clearest revealing's of God.

"Every day," says Goethe, "is a vessel into which a great deal may be poured, if we will actually fill it up; that is, with thoughts and feelings, and their expression into deeds as elevated and amiable as we can reach to."

We can make our days radiant and beautiful, and fill them with life. A mere dreary treadmill round--waking, eating, drinking, walking, working, sleeping--is not enough to make any life worthy; we must put the glory of love, of best effort, of sacrifice, of prayer, of upward-looking, and heavenward-reaching, into the dull routine of our life's every-day, and then the most burdensome and uneventful life will be made splendid with the glory of God.

Our Debt to the Past

"We see by the light of thousands of years,

And the knowledge of millions of men;

The lessons they learned through blood and in tears

Are ours for the reading, and then

We sneer at their errors and follies and dreams,

Their frail idols of mind and of stone,

And call ourselves wiser, forgetting, it seems,

That the future may laugh at our own."

Nearly all the precious things in our lives are made sacred to us--by their cost. This is true even of material things. We cannot live a day--but something must die to become food for the sustaining of our life. We cannot be warmed in winter--but some miner must crouch and toil in the deep darkness, to dig out the fuel of our fires. We cannot be clothed--but worms must weave their own lives into threads of silk, or sheep must shiver in the chill air, that we may have their fleeces to cover us. The gems and jewels which the women wear, and which they prize so highly as ornaments--are brought to them through the anguish and the peril of the poor wretches who hunt or dive for them in cruel seas. The furs we wrap about us in the winter--cost the lives of the creatures, which first wore them, which have to die to yield the warmth and comfort for us. Think, too, of the sweet songbirds that must be captured and cruelly slaughtered--to get feathers for the women's hats. Every comfort or luxury which we enjoy--comes to us at the price of weariness and pain, sometimes of anguish and tears, in those who procure and prepare it for us.

In the higher spheres, the same is true. The books we read, and whose pages give us so much pleasure and profit, are prepared for us, oftentimes, at great cost to their authors. The great thoughts that warm our hearts and inspire us to noble living--are the fruit, many times, of pain and struggle. "Wherever a great thought is born," says one, "there has been a Gethsemane." Men had to pass through darkness and doubt to learn the lessons of faith and hope, which they have written in such fair lines for us. They had to endure temptations, and fight battles in which they well-near perished--that they might set down for us their bright

inspiring story of victory and triumph. They had to meet sorrows in which their hearts were almost broken--to learn how to write the strong words of comfort, which so strengthen us as we read them in our times of grief. We do not know what some of the glad hymns of faith and hope, which lift up our hearts as on eagles' wings, cost those who first sang them. They have learned in suffering what they teach in song.

You read a book which helps you. Its words seem to throb with life. You are in sorrow--and it comforts you. You are in darkness--and its lines appear to be luminous for you with an helpful light. You feel that the person who wrote the book has somehow understood your very experiences, and, like a most skillful physician, has brought to you just the healing your heart needs. But you do not know the pain, the anguish, the suffering, the struggle, and the darkness--through which he had to pass before they could write these living words.

In one of his epistles Paul tells us that all things are ours, whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life or death. That is, we are the inheritors of the fruits of all godly lives in all past centuries. Every past age has contributed to the wealth we now have. David's songs are ours, and so are Paul's epistles, and Peter's sermons and letters and lessons of failure and restoration.

"If there is anything good or true or beautiful in us, the saints and the poets and the sages have entered into our lives, and have helped to develop those qualities in us."

We exult in our civilization, our advancement, our refinement, our knowledge, our culture, our arts, our wonderful inventions, our Christian society, and the many pleasant things of our modern life. Do we remember that all this comes to us from the toils and tears and sacrifices, the study, the thought, the invention, the sweat, and the pain--of thousands who have gone before us? There has not been a true life anywhere in the past, however humble, that has not contributed in some degree to the good and blessing we now enjoy. George Eliot says, "The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistorical facts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who have lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest now in unvisited tombs." Not a leaf has ever fluttered down into the dust and perished there--but has helped to enrich the earth's soil; and not a humble life in all the past has been lived purely and nobly--but the world today is a little richer and better for it.

Look at our home life. We should not forget that, though they are ours without price, the good things of our homes have not been without cost to those whose love we are indebted for them. We have but to think of the untiring affection that sheltered our infancy, and guided our feet in our tender years, and of the self-denials and sacrifices, the toils and watching's, the care and anxiety, the loss of rest, the broken nights, the planning, the praying, the weeping, and all the cost of love--for love always costs--along the days of childhood and youth. Thus oftentimes much of the good in our homes has come down from the past--the fruit of the labor and the suffering of a long line of ancestors. Hence every comfort and joy and beauty should be sacred as a sacrament to us, because it has been gotten for us by hands of love, at cost of toil, sacrifice and self-denial.

Daniel Webster, referring to the early home of his parents in a log cabin, built amid the snow-drifts of New Hampshire, "at a period so early that, when the smoke rose first from its crude chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada," uttered these noble words concerning this crude cabin, "Its remains still exist. I make it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations, which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early

affections, and the touching narratives and incidents, which mingle with all that I know of the primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living; and if ever I am ashamed of it, or ever fail in affectionate veneration for him who reared it, and defended it against the savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and, through the fire and blood of a seven years' Revolutionary War, shrank from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice, to save his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own, may my name, and the names of my posterity, be blotted forever from the memory of mankind!"

Or we may think of our country. We enjoy its liberties and its prosperity's. We look at our beautiful flag, and our hearts are filled with patriotic pride. We sit in peace beneath its sheltering folds. We think of our institutions, our beneficent government, our civilization, our schools, and our churches, the peace and safety we enjoy. But we should not forget what all these national blessings cost those who procured them, and those who have preserved them for us. Our present Christian civilization is the growth of many centuries of fidelity, of sacrifice, of blood. The story of the struggle for human freedom is a story of tears and suffering and martyrdom. Every schoolboy knows what it cost the colonists to lay the foundations of our nation; how bravely they fought, how they suffered in maintaining the principles, which enter into the Constitution, and are the basis of all that is noble in our country. Every thread of our flag represents a precious cost in loyalty to the truth, and to the cause of human rights. Our Civil War is not yet too distant for many of us to remember the price that was paid in those dark, sad days on battle fields and in prisons by brave men, to preserve the liberty that is so dear to us, and to wipe out the shame of human slavery that, until then, had still blotted our escutcheon. Thus everything that is noble and good in our country--comes to us from sacrifice and blood, somewhere along the past centuries.

There is one other obvious application of this principle of the cost of all blessings. We have great joy in our Christian blessings. We are children of God. We have Christ's peace in our hearts. We walk beneath the smile of God. We have comfort in our sorrow, guidance in our perplexities, help in temptation, and the assurance of eternal life. We should never forget that all these priceless blessings, which are so free to us--come to us through the cross and passion of our Savior. By his stripes we are healed. We have joy--because he endured sorrow. We have peace in the midst of the storm. We have forgiveness, because the darkness gathered about his soul on the cross. The hands that save us are pierced hands--pierced in saving us.

"I fall not on my knees and pray,

But God must come from heaven to fetch that sigh,

And pierced hands must take it back on high;

And through his broken heart and cloven side

Love makes an open way

For me, who could not live--but that He died."

These are illustrations of this great law of the cost of all that is good. Past ages have sent down to us their fruits of pain and sacrifice and loss to enrich us. Our inheritances, others toiled to get them for us. The blessings of our homes and firesides--come to us baptized with love's tears and blood. Everything that is beautiful in life has cost somewhere--anguish and pain. Heaven is entered only by the way of the cross of

Christ.

What is the lesson? When three brave men brought to David, who was shut up in a cave, water from the well of Bethlehem, cutting through the lines of the Philistines to get it for him--he would not drink it--but poured it out unto the Lord. "Be it far from me, O Lord," he said, "that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" Its cost made the water too sacred to be used even for the gratification of his own natural thirst. It could be fitly used in no way but as an offering to the Lord.

If that cup of water was so sacred because hands of love brought it through peril, what shall we say of the blessings of our lives, which have cost others so much? Are they not all sacred? This is one lesson. Nothing is common. Everything has been cleansed by its cost. How this thought transfigures all life, all our possessions and enjoyments!

Then a further lesson is that these sacred things must not be used for common ends, for any mere selfish gratification. We should consecrate them to God. But how can we do this? For one thing, we should never put anything of ours to any sinful or unholy use. We cherish heirlooms, mementos, and memorials of friends who are gone. We hold them as sacred as life itself. We would not for the world desecrate a keepsake. A poor woman told the other day, how her husband had taken her ring, her dead mother's gift to her, and had pawned it to get a little money to buy alcohol. No wonder her heart was almost broken by his act. When we think of it, all the blessings of our lives are sacred memorials of love, because they represent the toil and sacrifice of those who have gone before us. To use even the commonest of them in any sinful way--is to desecrate hallowed things.

Even to use our blessings solely for ourselves is also to dishonor them. David would not even quench his own sore thirst with the water, which had cost so much. It is sacrilege to use our good things for ourselves alone. We employ them worthily only when we share them with others. This is the true way of giving them to God. This is what he wants us to do with them. We lay them on his altar--but they are not burned up there, as were the ancient offerings. God gives them back to us--that we may take them, and with them bless other lives!

The Beatitude for the Unsuccessful

There may be no Bible beatitude saying expressly, "Blessed are the unsuccessful," but there are beatitudes, which are equivalent to this. We take these from our Lord's own lips, "Blessed are those who mourn," "Blessed the poor," "Blessed are those who are persecuted," "Blessed are you when men shall revile you," "Blessed are you when men shall hate you."

Then many other Scripture passages have similar teaching. Evidently not all blessings lie in the sunshine; many of them hide in the shadows. We do not read far in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, without finding that earthly prosperity is not the highest good that God has for us. Our Lord speaks very plainly about the perils of worldly success.

The Bible is indeed a book for the unsuccessful. Its sweetest messages are to those who have fallen. It is the book of love and sympathy. It is like a mother's bosom to lay one's head upon--in the time of distress or pain. Its pages teem with cheer for those who are discouraged. It sets its lamps of hope to shine in darkened chambers. It reaches out its hands of help to the fainting, and to those who have fallen. It is full of comfort for those who are in sorrow. It has its many special promises for the needy, the poor, and the bereft. It is a book for those who have failed, for the disappointed, the defeated, and the discouraged.

It is this quality in the Bible which makes it so dear to the heart of humanity. If it were a book only for the strong, the successful, the victorious, the unfallen, those who have no sorrow, who never fail, the whole, the happy--it would not find such a welcome wherever it goes in the world. So long as there are tears and sorrows, and broken hearts, and crushed hopes, and human failures, and lives burdened and bowed down, and spirits sad and despairing--so long will the Bible be a good book believed in as a God-inspired book, and full of inspiration, light, help, and strength for earth's weary ones.

The God of the Bible is the God of those who have not succeeded. Wherever there is a weak, stumbling Christian, unable to walk alone--to him the divine heart goes out in tender thought and sympathy; and the divine hand is extended to support him, and keep him from falling. Whenever a Christian has fallen, and lies in defeat or failure--over him bends the heavenly Father in kindly pity, to raise him up and to help him to begin again.

Some people think that the old Mosaic Law is cold and loveless; but as we look through it, we find many a word which tells of the gentle heart of God. Every seventh year the people were to let their farms rest--so that the poor might eat the fruits that grew upon them. They were taught to be mindful of the needy in every harvest-time. They were not to reap too closely the corners of their fields, nor glean their vineyards too carefully, picking off every grape. They were to leave something for the poor and the stranger. Thus the needy were God's special and particular care.

In Eastern lands, the widow and the orphan are peculiarly desolate and defenseless. But God declares himself their particular helper and defender. In the midst of dreary chapters of laws, we come upon this gleam of divine gentleness. "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot." Sheaves were to be left in the field, olives on the tree, grapes on the vine, for the fatherless and the widow. The God of the Bible has a partiality of kindness for those who have lost the human guardians of their feebleness.

Wherever there is weakness in anyone, the strength of God is especially revealed. "The Lord preserves the simple." The simple are those who are innocent and childlike, without skill or cunning to care for themselves, those who are unsuspecting and trustful, who are not armed by their own wisdom and are against the wiles of cruel people. The Lord takes care of these, defends them, keeps and guards them. Indeed, the safest people in the world are those who have no power to take care of themselves. Their very defenselessness, is their best protection--for then God himself becomes their guardian.

There is a Turkish proverb, which says, "The nest of the blind bird is built by God." Have you ever seen a blind child in a home? How helpless is it? It is at the mercy of any cruelty, which an evil heart may inspire. It is an open prey to all dangers. It cannot take care of itself. Yet how lovingly and safely it is sheltered! The mother's love seems tenderer for the blind child--than for any of her other children. The father's thought is not so gentle for any of the strong ones as for this helpless one. As one says, "Those sealed eyes, those tottering feet, those outstretched hands--have a power to move those parents to labor and care and sacrifice, such as the strongest and most beautiful of the household does not possess."

This picture gives us a hint of the special, watchful care of God for his weak children. Their very helplessness of His children, is their strongest plea to the divine heart. The God of the Bible is the God of the weak, the unsheltered. He sends his strongest angels to guard them. The children's angels, the keepers of the little ones, the weak ones, the simple, appear always as heaven's privileged ones before God.

The God of the Bible is the God also of the broken-hearted. "The Lord is near the brokenhearted." Psalm 34:18. "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The world cares little for the broken hearts. Indeed, people oftentimes break hearts by their cruelty, their falseness, their injustice, their coldness, and then move on as heedlessly as if they had trodden only on a worm. But God cares. Broken-heartedness attracts him. The plaint of grief on earth--draws him down from heaven.

Physicians in their rounds do not stop at the homes of the well--but of the sick. Surgeons on the field of battle do not pay attention to the unhurt, the unwounded; they bend over those who have been torn by shot or shell, or pierced by sword or saber. So it is with God in his movements through this world; it is not to the whole and the well--but to the wounded and stricken, that he comes with sweetest tenderness. Jesus said of his mission: "He has sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted." Isaiah 61:1

We look upon trouble as misfortune. We say the life is being destroyed, which is passing through adversity. But the truth which we find in the Bible, does not so represent suffering. God is a repairer and restorer of the hurt and ruined life. He takes the reed which is bruised--and by his gentle skill makes it whole again, until it grows into fairest beauty. When a branch of a tree is injured, the whole tree begins at once to send of its sap to the wounded part to restore it. When a violet is crushed by a passing foot, air and sun and cloud and dew all at once begin their ministry of healing, giving of their life to bind up the wound of the little flower. So Heaven does with human hearts when they are wounded. The love, pity, and grace of God minister sweet blessing of comfort and healing, to restore that which is broken.

Much of the most beautiful life in this world, comes out of sorrow. As "fair flowers bloom upon rough stalks," so many of the fairest flowers of human life grow upon the rough stalks of suffering. We see that those who in heaven wear the whitest robes, and sing the loudest songs of victory, are they who have come out of great tribulation. Heaven's highest places are filling, not from earth's homes of glad festivity and tearless joy--but from its chambers of pain; its valleys of struggle where the battle is hard; and its scenes of sorrow, where pale cheeks are wet with tears, and where hearts are broken. The God of the Bible--is the God of the bowed down, whom he lifts up into his strength. Earth's failures are not failures--if God is in them.

The same is true of spiritual life. God is the God of those who fail. Not that he loves those who stumble and fall, better than those who walk erect without stumbling; but he helps them more. The weak believers get more of his grace than those who are strong believers. There is a special divine promise, which says, "My divine power is made perfect in weakness." That is, we are not weakest when we think ourselves weakest; nor are we strongest when we think ourselves strong. God's power is made perfect in weakness.

Human consciousness of weakness gives God room to work. Human power is made perfect in weakness. He cannot work with our strength, because in our self-conceit we make no room for him. Before he can put his strength into us, we must confess that we have no strength of our own. When we are conscious of our own insufficiency, we are ready to receive of the divine sufficiency. Thus our very weakness is an element of strength. Our weakness is an empty cup--which God fills with his own strength.

You may think that your weakness unfits you for noble, strong, beautiful living--or for sweet, gentle, helpful serving. You wish you could get clear of it. It seems to burden you--an ugly spiritual deformity. But really it is something which--if you give it to Christ--he can transform into a blessing, a source of His power. The friend by your side, whom you envy because he seems so much stronger than you are--does not get so much of Christ's strength as you do. You are weaker than him--but your weakness draws to you divine

power, and makes you strong.

There should be unspeakable comfort and inspiration for us, in this truth. For example, we have not been successful in our life. We have tried hard--but have not been successful. This is the way it seems, at least on the earthly side. But if, meanwhile, we have been true to God, and faithful in duty, there has been an unfailing inner prosperity, which we do not see. This world's affairs are but the scaffolding of our real life, and within the rough exterior of earthly failure--there has risen continually the noble building of a godly character.

A little story poem tells of an eager throng of youth setting out in a race. One among them excelled all the others in courage, strength, and grace, and gave early promise of winning. The way was long and hard, and the goal far away--but still this favorite held his place in the lead.

"But ah, what folly! See, he stops

To raise a fallen child,

To place it out of dangers way,

With kiss and warning mild.

A fainting comrade claims his care--

Once more he turns aside;

Then stays his strong young steps to be

A feeble woman's guide.

And so, wherever duty calls,

or sorrow, or distress,

He leaves his chosen path, to aid,

To comfort, and to bless."

So at least when the race is over and the victors are crowned, some with fame's laurels, some with beauteous flowers, some with gold circlets on their brows--all unknown, unheeded, with empty hands and uncrowned head, stands this youth, the real winner of the race. Earth had no crown for him--but on his face shines heaven's serene and holy light.

This tells the story of thousands of earth's failures. Those who might have won highest honors among men, turn aside from their ambitions to do God's work in the world. They stop to bless others, to comfort sorrows, to cheer loneliness, to lift up fallen ones, to help the weak. In the race with the world's men, they lose--but in God's sight they are the real winners. Angels applaud them, and Christ will reward and crown them.

The world has honor enough for those who succeed. There are plenty of books about men and women who became famous. There is glory for those who began among the ranks of the poor, and climbed upward to the highest places. There are poets enough to sing the story of those who win in the battle. But

the Bible wreaths its laurel chaplets for the unsuccessful. It sings the songs of those who fail. Its hands of help are under the fallen. Its brightest crowns are for those whom earth passes by. When the end comes, and life's revelations are all made--then it will appear that many who in this world have been thrust aside, or trampled down in the dust, or even burned at the stake, or nailed on crosses--have been exalted to highest honor in the life beyond earth.

We would better, therefore, learn to measure life by true standards. No one has really failed--who has lived for God, who has lived according to God's law, who has wrought on the temple of truth, in the cause of righteousness.

The Blessing of Quietness

It would seem that anybody could keep still and quiet. It requires no exertion, we would say. Work is hard--but it ought to be easy to rest. It takes effort to speak; it ought to be easy just to be silent.

But we all know that few things are harder for most people than to be still. Our lives are like the ocean, in their restlessness. This is one of the proofs of our immortality. We are too great to be quiet. A stone has no trouble in keeping still. A clam never gets nervous. The human soul was made for God and its very grandeur renders its repose and quiet, amid the things of earth the most difficult of all attainments.

Yet quietness is a lesson that is set for us with great frequency in the Bible. We are told that the effect of righteousness is quietness. The Shepherd leads his sheep by the quiet waters. We are told to "study to be quiet"--to be ambitious to be quiet, as a marginal reading gives it. The apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, Peter says, "Is it a womanly adorning which is in the sight of God, of great price." A dry morsel and quietness therewith, the wise man tells us, is better than feasting with strife. Then we are assured that in quietness and in confidence there is strength.

Thus the thought of quietness, shines with very bright luster in the Scriptures. It is used sometimes in its literal sense. Evidently God does not like noise. Then sometimes, it is used to denote the restful spirit. Restlessness it is not spiritually beautiful. Peace is a high attainment. Thus quietness indicates a rich Christian culture. It is not easily reached. Soldiers say that in war it is much harder to stand still under fire--than it is to rush into the battle. It is easier to be in the midst of the active duties and struggles of spiritual life--than it is to be compelled to wait and be still. Waiting is harder than working. For many people it requires more strength to work quietly--than it does to bluster. It is only the great engine which runs noiselessly; the little machine fusses and sputters. Quietness in a man or a woman, is a mark of strength.

Many people suppose that noise indicates strength. They think a person is a great preacher just in proportion to the loudness of their voice. They mistakenly think--that eloquence is noise; that Boanerges had great spiritual power; that the noisy man was the strong one; that people who make the most bluster and show, are the greatest workers. But a closer observation soon shows us, that this is an untrue measurement. Loudness is not power.

This great preacher was the one who most deeply and widely impressed other lives, turning them from sin to holiness and made them blessings in the world. Noise is impertinent in Christ's work, and only detracts from the preacher's power.

In all departments of life, it is the quiet forces which affect most. The sunbeams fall all day long, silently, unheard by human ear; yet there is in them a wondrous energy and a great power for blessing and good.

Gravitation is a silent force, with no rattle of machinery, no noise of engines, no clanking of chains, and yet it holds all the stars and worlds in their orbits and swings them through space with unvarying precision. The dew falls silently at night when we sleep, and yet it touches every plant and leaf and flower with new life and beauty. It is in the lightening, not in the thunder-peal, that the electric energy resides. Thus even in nature, strength lies in quietness, and the mightiest energies work noiselessly.

The same is true also in moral and spiritual things. It is in the calm, quiet life--that the truest strength is found. The power that is blessing the world these days--comes from the purity, sweetness, and self-denial of gentle mother-love, from the voiceless influence of example in faithful fathers, from the patience and unselfishness of devoted sisters, from the tender beauty of innocent child-life in homes; above all--from the silent cross and the divine Spirit's breathings of gentle stillness. The agencies that are doing the most to bless the world are the noiseless ones. Spiritual power seems to hide itself in silent ministries and to shun those that advertise themselves. "The kingdom of heaven comes not with observation."

If therefore we would be strong--we must learn to be quiet. A noisy talker is always weak, lacking the royal power of control. Quietness in speech, is a mark of self-mastery. The Scripture says, "If any stumbles not in word, the same is a perfect person, able to bridle the whole body also." The tendency of the grace of Christ in the heart, is to soften and refine the whole nature. It makes the very tones of the voice gentler. It curbs boisterousness, into quietness. It represses angry feelings, and softens them into gentleness of love. It restrains and subdues resentment, teaching us to return kindness for unkindness, gentleness for rudeness, blessing for cursing, prayer for spiteful usage. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The love of Christ in the heart--makes one like Christ himself, and he is quiet. He was never flustered. He never fumed nor fretted, was never worried. He never spoke hastily on the street. There was a calmness in his soul, which showed itself in every word he spoke, in every look of his eye, in all his bearing.

It is well that we learn the lesson of quietness. It is a secret of power. It will save us from outbursts of temper, and from saying the rash and hasty words, which an hour afterward, we would be sorry for having said, and which if spoken would make so much bitterness and trouble for us. It will enable us to be cheerful and patient amid the cares and vexations of life.

There is a blessing in being still and quiet in the time of suffering. "Does it hurt you severely?" One asked of a friend who lay with a broken arm. "Not when I keep it still," was the answer. This is the secret of much of the victoriousness we see in rejoicing Christians. They conquer the pain and the bitterness, by keeping still. They do not ask questions, nor demand to know why they have trials. They believe in God, and are so sure of his love and wisdom, that no doubt, no fear, and no uncertainty pain them. Peace is their pillow, because they have learned to be still. Their quietness robs trial of its sharpness, sorrow of its bitterness, death of its sting, and the grave of its victory.

Quietness is a blessed secret for the wives and mothers in the home. It is impossible for any gentlewoman, though her household life be even ideally Christian and happy, to avoid having many experiences that try her sensitive spirit. Probably the most perfect earthly marriage has its times, especially in its earliest years, its harsh incidents and its crude contacts, which tend to disturb the wife's heart and give her pain. It is hard, or at least it takes time, for the average man to learn to be so

gentle--that no word, touch, act, habit, or disposition of his, shall ever hurt the heart of the woman he loves even most tenderly and truly. On her part--nothing but the love which is not easily provoked, which can be silent and sweet--not silent and sullen--but silent and sweet--in any circumstances, can make even holiest wedded life what it should be. Blessed is the wife who has learned this lesson.

Every home with its parents and children presents a problem of love, which only the spirit of quietness can solve. Tastes differ. Individuality is oftentimes strong and aggressive. There are almost sure to be willful, self-assertive spirits in even the smallest family, those that want their own way, that are not disposed to do even their fair share of the yielding. In some homes there are despotic spirits. In the best there are diversities of spirit, and the process of self-discipline and training requires years before the entire household can dwell together in ideal sweetness.

A German musician with an ear exquisitely sensitive to harmony, soon after arriving in our country, attended a church. But the singing was most discordant, jarring painfully upon his trained ear. He could not courteously go out of the church while the service was in progress, and therefore he resolved to endure the torture as patiently as possible. But soon he distinguished, amid the discord of the congregation, one voice--the soft, clear voice of a woman, singing calmly, steadily, and truly. She was not disturbed by the noisy, discordant notes of her companions in the worship--but sang on patiently, firmly, and sweetly. And as the visitor listened, one voice after another was drawn by this one singer's gentle influence into harmony. Until before the hymn had been finished, the whole congregation was singing in perfect unison.

So it is often in the making of a home. At first, the individual lives are willful, uncontrolled, and self-assertive, and there is discord in the household life. It takes time and most patient love to bring all into sweet harmony. But if the wife and mother, the real homemaker, has learned the blessed lesson of quietness, her life is the one of calm, clear, true song, which never falters, and which brings all the other lives, little by little, up to its own gentle key--until at last the life of the home is indeed a sweet song of love.

Sometimes it is the daughter and sister in the home, whose quiet sweetness blesses the whole household. She has learned the lesson of patience and gentleness. She has smiles for everyone. She has the tact to dissipate little quarrels by her kind words. She softens the father's ill temper when he comes in weary from the day's cares. She is a peacemaker in the home, a happiness-maker, through the influence of her own lovingness of spirit, and draws all at length--into harmony with her own quietness and peace.

These are familiar illustrations of the blessing of quietness. Wherever we find this quality in any life, it has a wondrous influence. It surely is a lesson worth learning, better than the winning of the crown. But can it be learned? Can the blustering, quick-tempered, rash-speaking man or woman learn to be quiet and self-mastered? Yes! Moses learned it, until he became the meekest man. John learned it, until he became the beloved disciple, lying on Jesus' bosom. Any one who will enter Christ's school can learn it, for he says: "Come unto me; Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; and you shall find rest unto your soul."

Quietness never can come through the hushing of the world's noise, so that there shall be nothing to try or irritate the spirit. We cannot find or make a quiet place to live in, and thus get quiet in our own soul. We cannot make the people about us loving and gentle that we shall never have anything uncongenial or unkindly to vex or annoy us. Nothing but the peace of God in the heart can give it. Yet we can have this peace if we will simply and always do God's will and then trust him. A quiet heart--will give a quiet life!

On Being a Discourager

It is a sin to be a hinderer! You who make it harder for others to live, are doing the adversary's work. We are in this world to lighten burdens, to gather the stones out of the way and to make the road of life a little easier. This is the law of Christian life. They cannot live for themselves; if they do--they must lose all. They must hold all their gifts and powers for the blessing of others.

It is a radical perversion of the law of Christian life, therefore, when one becomes in any way--a hinderer of others. Yet there are many people who do this. There are some who do it in a negative way by withholding from others lives, in their care and burden and sorrow--the cheer, inspiration, or comfort, which they have it in their power to bestow.

Sometimes this is done in cold selfishness, from sheer indisposition to lend a hand to a brother or sister. More frequently, however, it is through a lack of sensitiveness to others' needs and sufferings, a lack of true sympathy with human life in its weakness. There are those who have never known pain themselves and have no sense of pain in others. They lack that delicacy of touch, which is needed even when the heart is loving, to impart comfort and inspiration. So it happens, that there are many people who are hinderers of others, through the withholding of the cheer and help, which they might give.

But there are others whose influence is directly and positively hindering. Instead of being wings to those whose lives they touch--they are weights. They are discouragers. They never have a glad, cheerful, hopeful word for anyone; on the other hand, they always find some way to dampen ardor, to chill enthusiasm, to discount hope, and to put clouds into clear skies. They seem to think it a sin to be happy themselves, or to encourage happiness in any other person. They find all the shadows in life and persist in walking in them. They magnify small troubles into great trials. They look at little hills of difficulty through lenses of morbid feeling that make them grow into tall mountains.

Thus encompassed with gloom themselves, they make darkness for others, never brightness, wherever they may go. In this way they do a great deal of harm in the world. They make all life harder--for those they influence. Instead of being comforters of others, they make sorrow harder to bear, because they exaggerate it, and because they blot out all the stars of hope and comfort which God has set to shine in this world's night. They make others' burdens appear heavier, because by their discouraging philosophy, they leave the heart less strong and brave to endure. They make life's battles sorer for everyone, because, by their ominous forebodings, they paralyze the arm which wields the sword.

The whole effect of the life of these people is to discourage others; to find unpleasant things--and point them out; to discover dangers--and tell about them; to look for difficulties and obstacles--and proclaim them. If you meet them with buoyant mood, you will not be long in their company before you will find all the buoyancy stealing out of you, under the influence of their disheartenment. If you turn to them in your trouble, you will go away feeling that your condition is utterly hopeless, and will be ready almost to despair.

A thoughtful man was asked to contribute to the erection of a monument to one of these discouragers, and replied, "Not a dollar. I am ready to contribute toward building monuments to those who make us hope--but I will not give a dollar to help perpetuate the memory and influence of those who live to make us despair." He was right. People who make life harder for us cannot be called benefactors. The true benefactors are those who show us light in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow, hope in our despair.

We all need to be strengthened and inspired, never weakened and disheartened for life's experiences. If we meet others cast down and discouraged, it is our duty as their friends, not to make their trials and their cares seem as great as we can--but rather to point out to them the bright light in their clouds and to put

new hope and courage in their hearts. If we find others in sorrow, it is our duty not to tell them merely how sorry we are for them, how we pity them--but, coming close to them in love, to whisper in their ears the comforts of divine grace, to make them stronger to endure their sorrow. If we find others in the midst of difficulties and sore struggles, faint and ready almost to yield, it is our duty not merely to bemoan with them the severity and hardness of their battles, and then to leave them to go on to sure defeat; but to stimulate and inspire them to bravery and victoriousness.

It is of vital importance that we learn this lesson--if we want to be true helpers of others. If we have only sadness to give to men and women, we have no right to go among them. The cloister is the only fit place for such moods. It is only when we have something that will bless others, and lift up their hearts, and give them glimpses of bright and beautiful things to live for, that we are truly commissioned to go forth as evangelists into the world.

"A singer sang a song of tears--

And the great world heard and wept.

For he sang of the sorrows of fleeting years--

And the hopes which the dead past kept;

And souls in anguish their burdens bore,

And the world was sadder than ever before.

A singer sang a song of cheer--

And the great world listened and smiled.

For he sang of the love of a Father dear

And the trust of a little child;

And souls that before had forgotten to pray,

Looked up and went singing along the way."

It is better that we should not sing of sadness--if our song ends there. There are sad notes enough already floating in the world's air, making moans in peoples' ears. We should sing always of hope, joy, and cheer. Jeremiah had a right to weep; for he sat amid the crumbling ruins of his country's prosperity, looking upon the swift and restless approach of woes that might have been averted.

Jesus had a right to weep on the Mount of Olives; for his eye saw the terrible doom coming upon the people he loved, after he had done all in his power to avert the doom which sin and unbelief were drawing down upon them. But not many of us are called to live amid griefs like those, which broke the heart of Jeremiah. And as for Jesus, we know what a preacher of hope he was wherever he went. Our mission must be to carry to people, not grief and tidings of ill--but joy and good news.

The preachers alone who truly bless the world--are preachers of hope. One who has only questions and doubts to give--has no right in a Christian pulpit. We ought not to add to the perplexity of people--by holding up shreds of torn pages as if our Christianity were something uncertain, a mere "if" or "perhaps."

"Give me your beliefs," said Goethe; "I have doubts enough of my own." So people are saying to us, "Give us your hopes, your joys, your sunshine, your life, your uplifting truths; we have sorrows, fears, clouds, ills, chains, doubts enough of our own."

This is the mission of Christianity in the world--to help people to be victorious, to whisper hope wherever there is despair, to give cheer wherever there is discouragement. It goes forth to open prisons, to unbind chains, and to bring out captives. Its symbol is not a cross-only--that is one of its symbols, telling of the price of our redemption, telling of love that died--but its final symbol is an open grave--open and empty. We know what that means. It tells of life, not of death; of life victorious over death. And we must not suppose that its promise is only for the final resurrection; it is for resurrection every day, and every hour, over all death. It means unconquerable, unquenchable, indestructible, immortal life at every point where death seems to have won a victory. Defeat anywhere is simply impossible, if we are in Christ and Christ in us.

It follows that there never can be a loss in a Christian's life--out of which a gain may not come, as a plant from a buried seed. There never can be a sorrow out of which a blessing may not be born. There never can be made to yield some fruit of strength.

If, therefore, we are true and loyal messengers of Christ, we can never be prophets of gloom, disheartenment, and despair. We must ever be heralds of hope. We must always have good news to tell. There is a gospel, which we have a right to proclaim to everyone, whatever be their sorrow. In Christ there is always hope, a secret of victory, a power to transmute loss into gain, to change defeat to victory, to bring life from death. We are living worthily--only when we are living victoriously ourselves at every point, when we are inspiring and helping others to live victoriously, and when our life is a song of hope and gladness, even though we sing out of tears and pain.

So it is our mission to be helpers, never hinderers, of others' faith and hope. Wherever we find one who is weary or disheartened, it is our part to take them by the hand and help them to rise, and to hold them by the hand until they are able to walk in safety. One word of discouragement from us in the presence of a human struggler--is treason to a soul we are set to help and protect with our own life.

Making Life a Song

The highest act of which immortal life is capable of, is praise. The un-praising life has not yet realized its holiest mission. It has not yet borne the sweetest, ripest, best fruit, that which in God's sight is most precious of all. In heaven all life is praise, and we come near heaven's spirit only as we learn to praise.

No other duty is enjoined so often in the Scriptures as praise. There are not so many texts about prayer as there are about praise. The Bible is full of music. The woods in the summer days are not so full of bird-notes as this sacred book is of voices of song. Christian life can realize the divine thought for it, only by being songful. The old fable of the harp of Memnon, that it began to breathe out sweet music the moment the morning light swept its chords, has its true fulfillment in the human soul, which, the instant the light of divine love breaks upon it, gives forth notes of gladness and praise.

The gift of song is one of the noblest endowments bestowed upon mortals. But there is a music which is not vocal. Everyone should be able to make music in the world--though he or she cannot sing a note. Milton says, "that he who hopes to write well in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition of the best and the noblest things." One cannot really sing songs which will be music in God's

ears, whose own life is not first, a song in its sweetness and beauty.

It is a great thing to write a hymn which lives. To have composed such a song as the Twenty-third Psalm, "Rock of Ages," or "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," is one of the noblest achievements possible in the world. Think what a ministry such songs have had, how many lives they have blessed, how much sorrow they have comforted. No other human service can be more blessed than to be permitted to give to the world a sweet song, which shall go singing on its way through generations. Yet we cannot all write hymns. We are not all poets, gifted to weave sweet thoughts into rhythmic verse which will charm our souls. We cannot all make hymns, which shall become as angels of peace, comfort, joy, or inspiration to weary lives. To only a few men and women in a generation, is the poet's tongue given.

But there is a way in which we may all make songs; we can make our own life a song. It does not need the poet's gift and are to do this, nor does it require that we shall be taught and trained in colleges and universities. The most unlettered person may so live--that gentle music shall breathe forth from their life through all their days. They need only to be true and loving. Every beautiful life is a song.

There are many people who live in circumstances and conditions of hardness and hardship, and who seem to make no music in the world. Their life is of that utterly dreary kind, which is devoid of all sentiment, which has no place for sentiment amid its severe toils and under its heavy burdens. Even home tenderesses seem to find little opportunity for growth in the long leisure-less days. Yet even such lives as these, doomed to hardest, dreariest toil, may and oftentimes do become songs, which minister blessing to many others.

The other day a workingman presented himself for admission to the church. He was asked what sermon or appeal had led him to take this step. "No sermon, no one's word, he answered--but a fellow workman for many years at the bench beside me has been so true, so faithful, so Christian-like in his character and conduct, in his disposition and temper, that his influence has brought me to Christ." This man's life, amid all its hardness, was a song of love.

There are many people living in the midst of unattractive circumstances, amid hardship, toil, and care, whose daily life breathes out gentle music, which bless others about them. They do no great services--but they crowd the hours with little ministries, which fall like silver bell-notes on weary hearts. They are faithful in all their commonplace duties. They are patient under all manner of irritating experiences. They keep happy and contented even in times of suffering and need, cheerful and trusting even in want. They live in quiet harmony with the will of God, making no jarring discords by unsubmission or willfulness. Thus in their humble sphere, they make music which is sweet to the ear both of God and man.

God wants our life to be a song. He has written the music for us in his Word and in the duties which come to us in our places and relations in life. To make our life beautiful music, we must be obedient and submissive. Any disobedience is the singing of a false note and yields discord. Any unsubmission breaks the melody. Obedience and joyous submission makes glad music.

But how much broken music there is in most of our lives! We fail in love's duties. Envious thoughts and feelings, jealousies, bitterness, anger, resentment, selfishness, all unloving words, acts, and tempers, are harsh discordances, which spoil the melody. Pride mars it; so does a violent temper. Certain hideous sounds made on musical instruments are called "Wolf-Notes." There are wolf-notes made sometimes in human lives--anger, hate, lust, and the wild utterances of passion. But we ought to strive to make only sweet music.

Our circumstances cannot always be easy. We cannot always have our own way. There will be many things, in the most favored lot, which would naturally jar upon the chords of our life. But we should learn so to live--as to yield only the music of love and peace, whatever our experiences may be.

A perfectly holy life would be a perfect song. In heaven this ideal melody will be attainable. There, these life-harps of ours will be perfectly attuned, and we shall have learned the lessons of love so well, that we shall never strike the wrong note. At the best on earth, however, our lives are imperfect in their harmonies, like instruments not yet in tune. If we are indeed in Christ's school, we are ever coming nearer and nearer in our renewed nature to the perfect divine likeness, and are learning to make sweeter music as the days go by.

We need to learn well the truth--that only the Master's hand can bring out of our souls the music which slumbers in them. A violin lies on the table, silent and still. We know that it is capable of giving out marvelous music. One weak hand takes it up and begins to draw the bow across the strings--but it yields only harsh, wailing discords. Then a master comes and takes it up. First he puts the strings in tune, and then he brings from the little instrument most entrancing strains. Our lives are like this violin. They are capable of producing rich and beautiful melody. But they must be skillful hands which touch the chords.

There are some people who seem able to bring out the best that is in us. Under their influence we are stimulated and inspired to noble and beautiful things. There are teachers who have wonderful power in finding and drawing out the best elements in the lives of their pupils. There are parents under whose wise and gentle teaching, touches the hearts of their children yielding all beautiful qualities. We all have friends whose influence over us is genial and kindly. We are conscious of being drawn ever toward goodness and truth and purity when we are with them. They arouse in us noble longings and aspirations. They call out our best endeavors and our gentlest and kindest dispositions. Others there are whose touch upon our life is uncongenial and unkindly--like the playing of an unskilled person upon a musical instrument. They arouse not our better--but our worse natures. They bring from us not sweet music--but jarred discord.

There is only One who can take our lives with their entire fault and sin, their broken strings and jangled chords, and bring from them the music of love, joy, and peace. It is related that once Mendelssohn came to see the great Freiburg organ. The old custodian, not knowing who his visitor was, refused him permission to play upon the instrument. At length, however, after much persuasion, he granted him permission to play a few notes. Mendelssohn took his seat, and soon the most wonderful music was breaking forth from the organ.

The old man was spell-bound. At length he came up beside the great master and asked his name. Learning it, he stood humiliated, self-condemned, saying, "And I refused you permission to play upon this prized organ!" There comes One to us and desires to take our life and play upon it. But we withhold ourselves from him and refuse him permission, when if we would but yield ourselves to him, he would bring from our souls heavenly music.

It is often in sorrow, that our lives are taught their sweetest songs. There is a story of a German baron who stretched wires from tower to tower of his castle, to make a great Aeolian harp. Then he waited to hear the music from it.

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