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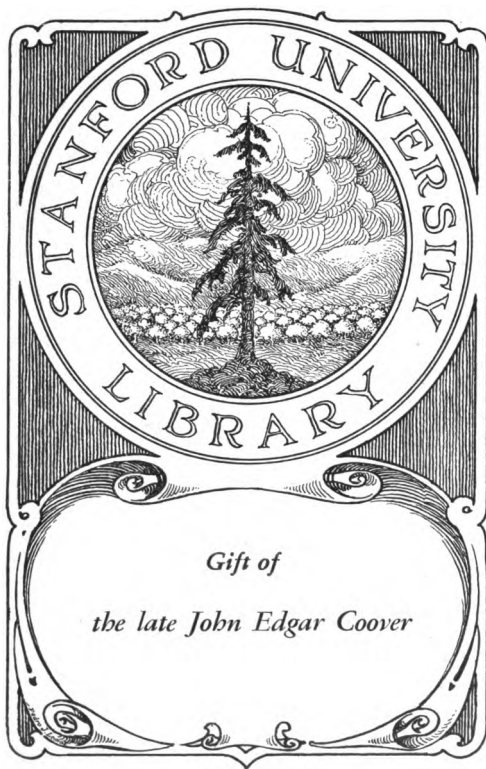


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*J. Edgar Coover*

No. 613





## THE INNER LIFE



# THE INNER LIFE

BY

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"SILENT TIMES"  
"THE  
UPPER CURRENTS"  
"IN PERFECT  
PEACE," ETC. ETC.

With Illustrations by  
Victor Prout & Hilda Gargett



"If peace be in the heart"  
"The wildest winter storm is full of beauty"

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IF we keep our heart right we need not greatly concern ourselves about our outer life. That will take care of itself, or, rather, it will be controlled from within. The trouble with too many people is that they think only of the outside, trying to make a good appearance, and neglect the culture of the inner life. The result is that the heart, unwatched, goes wrong, and then the whole life loses its beauty.

J. R. M.

PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

*“ My crown is in my heart, not on my head,  
Not deck'd with diamonds, and Indian stones ;  
Not to be seen ; my crown is called Content ;  
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.”*

*“ If sin be in the heart  
The fairest sky is foul, and sad the summer weather :  
The eye no longer sees the lambs at play together ;  
The dull ear cannot hear the birds that sing so sweetly,  
And all the joy of God's good earth is gone completely  
If sin be in the heart.”*

*“ The inner side of every cloud  
Is bright and shining ;  
We therefore turn our clouds about,  
And always wear them inside out,  
To show the lining.”*





**“ Make me Thy temple ; silently upbuild  
Within my heart thy holy dwelling-place,  
And let its deep recesses all be filled  
With the rich overflowings of thy grace ;  
My being’s chords and discords all are stilled,  
Waiting the revelation of thy Face.”**

THE ideal life is one that is beautiful within and without. In the description of the King’s daughter, the common version of our Bible says she is “ all glorious within : her clothing is of wrought gold.” The splendor of her spirit within is matched by her outer raiment.

One day, a number of years ago, a thoughtful girl was reading in an old book. It was time-worn, but on its pages were golden words which enshrined the wisdom of an ancient age. As the girl read, her eyes lingered on one rare sentence, which seemed to have a special message for her that day. As she pondered it, it took fast hold of her thought until she began to breathe it as her own. It was a prayer, — “ God make me beautiful within.”

It was the beginning of a new life for the earnest-spirited girl. God had found her and touched her heart. She was hearing a voice which called her to an experience that she had not known before. This ancient prayer was the angel of God sent to lead her to a ministry of blessing to the world, the like of which few lives have attained.

“ In that lone prairie home there came  
God’s voice that called her by her name,  
And her whole nature made reply  
In swift obedience, “ Here am I.”  
She made this prayer through toil and strife  
The inspiration of her life.  
Thrice blessed prayer that asked not wealth,  
Or rank, or fame, or ease, or health!  
Thus, Frances Willard chose the good,  
The glory of her womanhood,  
And still beneath the angels’ eyes  
The harvest of her sowing lies ! ”

“ God make me beautiful within.” All beauty must begin within. The heart must be pure if the life is to be pure. Unholy thoughts and desires within soon work their way outward and blot and stain the whole life. But a heart white and unspotted makes all the life clean.

Nothing is done well which is not done with the heart. A legend relates that in the later days of



Greek art a prize was offered for the best statue of one of the many deities of Greece. Among those who competed for the prize was a country boy who greatly loved this god, who believed in him and was ardently devoted to him. As an artist, he lacked the fine skill of many of those who competed, and his work when finished was crude and without the elements of beauty necessary to win for it the first place in the contest. But the god, — so the legend relates, — seeing the love that was in the boy's heart and how loyally and devotedly he had wrought, entered into the stone and by the power of his own life within it transformed the rudely carved statue into a form of surpassing beauty and grace.

It is only a heathen legend, but it illustrates the power of love which puts a mysterious charm into even commonplace work. What we do with love in our hearts, though it be not according to the rules of art, has in it a beauty which even the most artistic work, done without love, does not possess. Then when love has done its best, the Master comes and enters into the poor, imperfect effort and transfigures it.

We all know that love is the essential quality in our human relations. The gifts which the heart prompts may be poor and valueless in themselves, but to us they are sacred because of the holy senti-

ment which they represent. With God, too, it is the same. He wants our hearts. "Not yours, but you," is his claim upon us. He cares not for men's gifts, if they are not gifts of love.

It is the inner life, too, that makes the outer. The dweller builds the house and furnishes it to his own taste. What we are in the part of our life that people see is the outworking of the life within, which is hidden from view. For a time the outer may be better than the inner; men may pass for saints when they are only common sinners. But ultimately the actual reveals itself. The thing we really are finds its way through all disguises to the surface. Or the inner life may be better than the outer, more beautiful, more refined, more winning. Some people's noble hearts lose much in their imperfect interpreting. The medium of expression is not good. Shyness makes many persons seem far less gracious than they are. An unattractive face may act like crumpled glass in concealing or distorting the loveliness behind it. There are many people who do not appear at their best in society. The good qualities of their lives do not find suitable and worthy revealing in their words and manner. But heart beauty at length triumphs over all defect and distortion and writes itself on the external life, in deed, disposition, and character, if not also in the features.

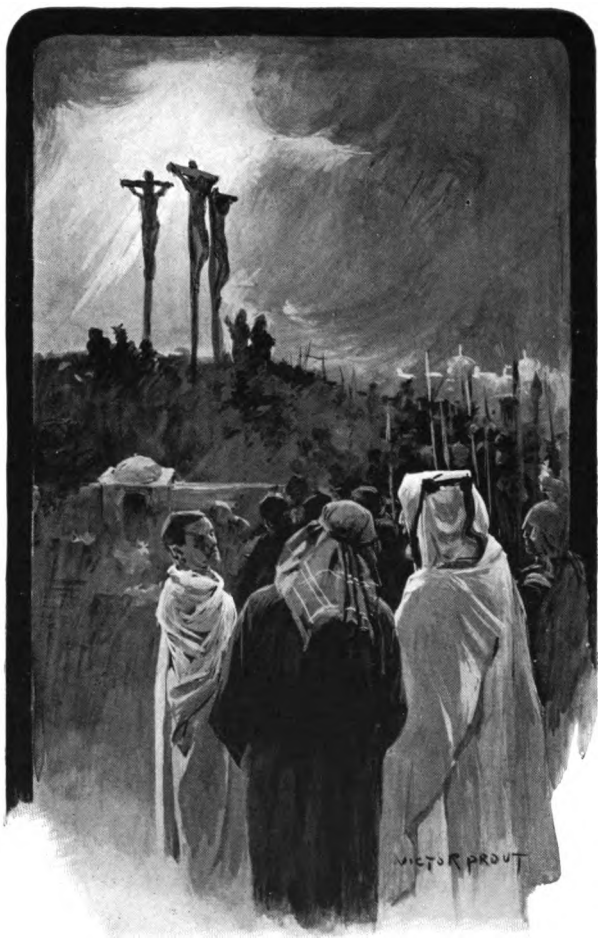
Again, in all life, it is only the inner that really counts with God. We get no credit in heaven for the things we pretend to have, but really do not have. Nor are we rewarded for what we do grudgingly or under compulsion. There is a very homely old story of one who in mistake dropped on a collection plate a much larger coin than he meant to give to the Lord that day. He afterwards tried to get the large piece back that he might substitute the smaller one instead. He was not permitted, however, to make the exchange. Then he said, in trying to console himself, that he would at least have the credit of giving more largely than he intended. But he was told that he would have credit only for what he meant to give, not for what he had by accident laid upon the plate. It is so in all life. Only that weighs with God which we really meant, the thing we intended to do. The motive is the determining factor in heaven's valuation of our acts. Forced service does not count. Only what our hearts inspire avails.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." The people in those days were looking for the coming of a kingdom like this world's empires. They were expecting to see a great King arise, one who would conquer all earth's powers and establish a universal sovereignty. But Jesus told them it was not such a kingdom that he had

come to set up, but a kingdom in people's hearts. Wherever Christ rules, there is this kingdom. It comes silently and invisibly, not with noise of marching armies and with pageant and show.

The story of the life of Christ in this world illustrates this truth. He came not with observation. His birth was the world's most wonderful event. It was the coming of God to make his home among men. It was love—divine love—that was born the first Christmas night. It had a very small and lowly beginning. It was only a little helpless baby sleeping its first sleep, that the shepherds saw when they came in from the fields after the angels had gone away. But the baby grew into manhood, and the divine love found expression in a life of wondrous beauty, which for three and thirty years moved among men. Other lives which this blessed life touched received a measure of its virtue, and thus the love began to diffuse itself.

At last this gentle life was ended. That is, it was poured out into the chill and death of this world. But it was not lost. It rose again and became a holy influence among men, an influence which ever since has been passing from life to life. The Holy Spirit who came on the day of Pentecost was simply this love of God which had been emptied from the heart of Christ on his cross, and





had now returned to earth to be reincarnated in men's hearts and lives.

Every Christian, therefore, should be a new centre of Christ-life in this world. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you." He wants us to be so filled with his life that his influence shall pour out through our lives for the brightening and sweetening of the world. He wants us to start a new Christmas every day, wherever we are.

"The kingdom of God is within you." That is, Christ is in our hearts. He has his throne there. If this be true, what will be the effect upon our lives? Recently in one of our cities an Oriental said he had observed that for some time before Christmas people's faces in this country seemed to have an unusual light in them. They were all bright and shining. Every one seemed kindly and courteous. Every one was more thoughtful, more desirous of giving pleasure, than had been his wont. Men who at other seasons of the year are stern and unapproachable had now become genial, easily approached. Those who ordinarily are close, never opening their hands to charity, had become for the time generous and charitable. Those who had been in the habit of doing small and mean things, when they entered the edge of the warm Christmas zone began to act like new

men, a kindly human interest taking possession of them. The Oriental who made these observations added that it would be a good thing if only the charm of this happy Christmas spirit could be made to project itself into and through the new year.

That is just what should take place, and would, if the kingdom of God were truly within us, and if it were permitted to hold full and abiding sway in our lives. We all feel very kind and loving in the glad Christmas days. We try to find poor people that we can help. When we feel like doing anything mean or unworthy, something checks us and we do an unselfish thing instead. Instead of being cross-grained and disagreeable, as probably some of us are at other seasons, we try now to be sweet and patient. Every story of need or want touches our hearts and makes us sympathetic. The Christmas spirit is in the air and we are breathing it, and its wholesomeness makes us thoughtful and kind. Nobody is unhappy or ungracious in the Christmastide, or if anybody is he must be a miserable misanthrope, or a pitiable dyspeptic.

What we need to seek is the carrying forward of this spirit into and through the months that follow. Why may not Christmastide be a new beginning of life for every one? We may as well confess that we have not always been sweet, agreeable, patient, and

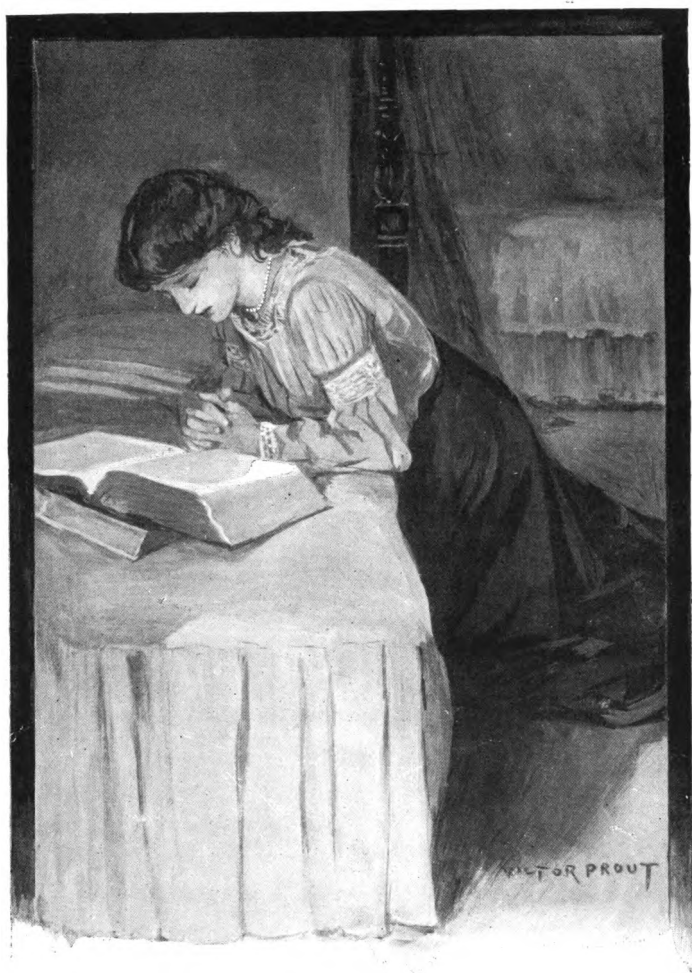
charitable in the past. Sometimes we have been miserable sinners against the law of good nature and of love. We have been uncharitable in our judgments. We have been harsh and disagreeable even to those nearest to us and dearest. We have cherished grudges. We have been more keen-eyed to see the tiny motes of fault in the eyes of others than the great beams of flaw in our own eyes. We have been too apt to cover or excuse our own sins and to expose the blemishes we detect in our brother. At Christmas time, however, it is altogether different with us. All the world seems beautiful in the sunlight of that happy day. Shall we not ask for grace to keep our loving "good will to men" ever after this?

If the kingdom of God be in us it will also make our lives pure and holy. We are not as good as we ought to be. We are not as good as we could be. In one of the pictures of the Christ-child in the stable, it is night, and there is no light in the place save a little rude lamp hanging from the roof. Yet the whole place is filled with a soft, gentle light that gives a rare glow to everything. When we look for the source of this light, we find that it streams from the child lying in the manger. The picture is true to its spiritual meaning. Thus it was in all Christ's life. Light ever streamed forth from him. He had light in himself, and when

he was in dark places the darkness was illuminated by the brightness that shone out from him. So it is always with Christ. His life sheds radiance on all things. Sorrow's gloom is lightened by his love. Earth's dark places are brightened by the shining of his face.

So it should be also with the influence of those who are truly following Christ. They have light in themselves and they illumine every dark place in their pathway. The gloom of sorrow is brightened by the outshining of their own peace. One who went with fear and hesitation to see a friend who had just passed through a great sorrow, dreading the meeting, and wondering what she could say to give comfort, was surprised to have her friend meet her with shining face—the shining of the peace and love of God. When it grew dark about her the light within her own soul streamed out. Instead of needing consoling she was herself the consoler.

Light is the emblem of truth, of right, of holiness. Nothing unholy can stay in Christ's presence. If we have the kingdom of God within us, we will be pure and righteous, too, as our Master is. There is great need in these very days for more holiness in the lives of men. It would be well if we would read the Sermon on the Mount over on our knees every day for a month. It would help to bring our lives up to tone. There is no doubt that in general



the world is growing better. Light, the light of divine truth, is being diffused more widely every day. Never was there such missionary activity in any past period of the world's history as there is today. Never were such sums of money given for the dissemination of the gospel as are given in these days. Never was there such sympathetic interest in humanity, in the suffering, the poor, the lapsed masses, as there is at this time.

But the consecration our Master wants, first of all, is the consecration of our lives. He wants not our money, nor our activities, nor our kindly interest in the relieving of distress, but our hearts, our wills. He wants our obedience. While Christ himself is the one great original, underived, and infinite Light of the world, the source of all other lesser lights, yet he says to us, "Ye are the light of the world." His light is to shine through our little lamps. It is a tremendous responsibility that this truth puts upon us. We stand for Christ in our respective places; we represent him; the blessings he would give to the world must flow through us. If we do not shine with the light of holiness, there is darkness about us where there ought to be light, and the guilt is ours.

So it is not enough for us to be agreeable, good-natured, and genial, and to go about with smiling faces; it is not enough for us to be kind to people;

it is not enough at Christmas time to bestow gifts on our friends, and to sing carols and anthems. We must be good as well as agreeable. We must be holy. We must be true. We must live clean lives. We must not hope to please God by being pleasant and complaisant and by having good manners, while under all this external whiteness his eyes see stain, hypocrisy, and all evil. Christmas means purity of heart. It means whiteness, like sunshine. The light that shines from the Christ-child is heaven's light, which has in it no flecks of stain. To have the kingdom of God within us is to be holy in thought, in word, in act.

If the kingdom of God is in us it will also make us blessings wherever we are. No one liveth to himself. Abraham was told two things: "Thou shalt be blessed," and "Thou shalt be a blessing." Being comes before doing. We must receive before we can give. But if we have received we must give. Christ came and brought love, divine love, down to earth. He gives this love to all his friends. Then they are to go about among people and love as he did. This means that they are to do good to others. We have learned only half the lesson of love when we seek to have in our hearts kindly thoughts and good wishes. The other half of the lesson is that we must go out to put into deeds the kindnesses we dream, to get into act the





good wishes we cherish in our hearts. The artist's pictures are first in his brain, but if he would add to the beauty of the world he must paint them on canvas. God puts into our hearts sympathies, kindly feelings, desires to make others happier and better, and we must make sure that these divine affections within find expression in words and deeds. George Macdonald says : —

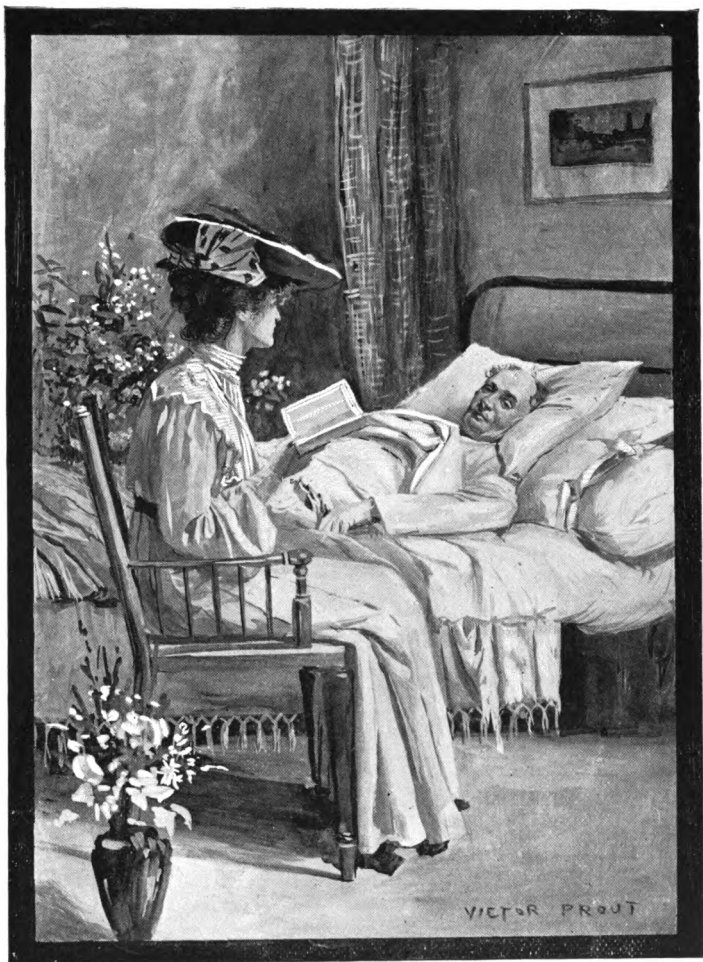
And if in thy life on earth,  
In the chamber or by the hearth,  
'Mid the crowded city's tide,  
Or high on the lone hillside,  
Thou canst cause a thought of peace,  
Or an aching thought to cease,  
Or a gleam of joy to burst  
On a soul in sadness nurst :  
Spare not thy hand, my child,  
Though the gladdened should never know  
The well-spring amid the wild,  
Whence the waters of blessing flow.

An inner life of love changes the aspect of all other lives it touches, casting the light of its own spirit upon them. There is a story of a young woman who was spending the day with a party of friends in the country, rambling through the woods and among the hills. Early in the morning she picked up a branch of sweetbrier and put it in her

bosom. She soon forgot that it was there, but all day long, wherever she went, she smelled the spicy fragrance, wondering whence it came. On every woodland path she found the same odor, though no sweetbrier was growing there. On bare fields and rocky knolls and in deep gorges, as the party strolled about, the air seemed laden with the sweet smell. The other members of the party had their handfuls of all sorts of wild flowers, but the one fragrance that filled the air for her was sweetbrier. As the party went home on the boat, she thought, "Some one must have a bouquet of sweetbrier," not dreaming that it was she who had it.

Late at night, when she went to her room, there was the handful of sweetbrier tucked away in her dress, where she had put it in the morning and where unconsciously she had carried it all day. "How good it would be," she said to herself, as she closed her eyes, "if I could carry such a sweet spirit in my breast that every one I meet should seem lovely!"

The incident suggests the secret of a beautiful Christlike life. We cannot find sweetness on every path our feet must press, in every place we are required to go. Sometimes we must be among uncongenial people, people whose lives are not gentle, who are unloving in disposition, with whom it is not easy to live cordially in close relations. Some-



times we must come into circumstances which do not minister to our comfort, in which we do not find joy, gladness, encouragement. The only way to be sure of making all our course in life a path of sweetness is to carry the fragrance in our own life. Then, on the bleakest roads, where not a flower blooms, we shall still walk in perfumed air, the perfume carried in our own heart.

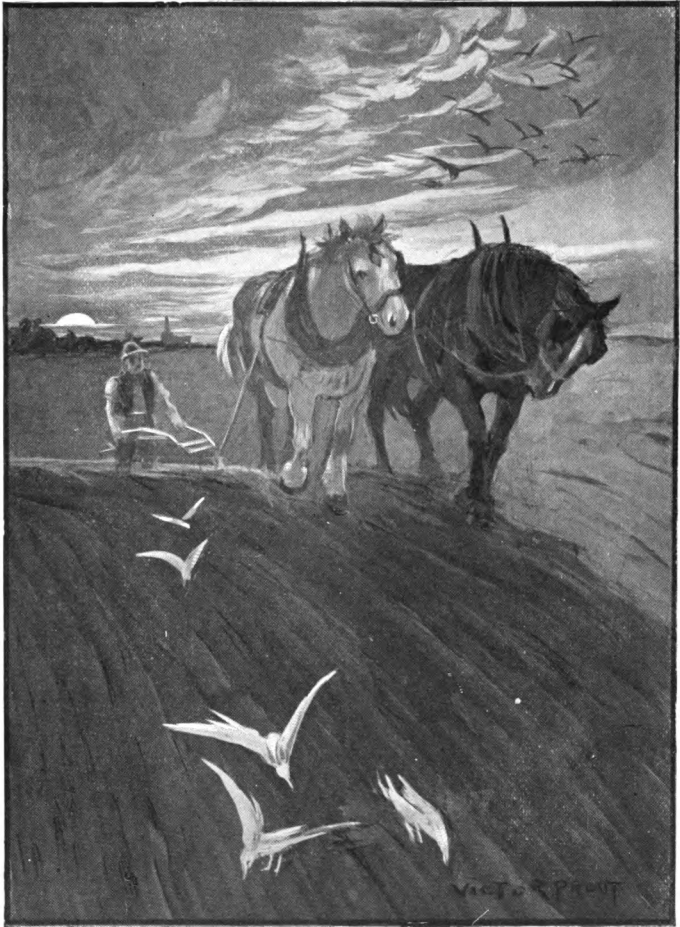
It is thus that Christ would have us live. He does not promise to lead us always through scenes of beauty, along paths of joy ; what he promises is to put the beauty and the joy into our own lives, so that we shall carry cheer and blessing wherever we go. St. Paul said that he had learned in whatsoever state he was therein to be content. That is, he had in himself, in his own heart, through the grace of God and the love of Christ given to him, the resources for contentment, and was not dependent upon his condition or his circumstances. Some people seem so happily constituted by nature, having such sunny spirits and such cheerful dispositions, that they cannot help being loving and sweet. How others who are not so gifted by nature, or who are in poor health, or have much to try them, can keep always sweet, unaffected by their condition, is the problem. But they can. The secret is to have the love of Christ hidden in their hearts. That will make any life sweet.

In any case it is our own inner life that makes our world. We find in any place what we take with us. If our hearts are sweet, patient, gentle, loving, we find sweetness, patience, gentleness, and lovingness wherever we go. But if our hearts are bitter, jealous, suspicious, we find bitterness, jealousy, and suspicion on every path. If we go out among people in a combative spirit we find combativeness in those we meet. But if we go forth in a genial, sympathetic mood, in a charitable frame of mind, we find brotherliness and cordiality in every man we come up to in our walks and associations.

“ In ourselves the sunshine dwells,  
In ourselves the music swells ;  
Everywhere the heart awake  
Finds what pleasure it can make ;  
Everywhere the light and shade  
By the gazer's eye is made.”

If you have sweetbrier tucked away in your bosom, you will discover the fragrance of sweetbrier on every person you come near to. This is the secret of that fine art some people possess of always finding only good and beauty in others. They have goodness and beauty in themselves.

There are such people and there is no reason why we all should not set this ideal for our lives. The habit of finding only unpleasant things in



people is most unlovely. How much better it would be if we would train ourselves to see only beauty in others! There is no one in whom a Christly charity cannot find something to praise or commend. Humboldt tells of discovering some lovely little flowers growing on the very lip of the crater of Vesuvius. Pulverized lava had settled in a little depression and the birds or the winds had carried a few seeds which had dropped into the cupful of soil. Then the rain had fallen, and there on the edge of the crater bloomed these little flowers. So in the most depraved life there still are some gleams of beauty which he who hath eyes to see may see.

But only those who have hearts of love can see the lovely things in unlovely lives. Some, indeed, have their faculty of vision so perverted that they can scarcely see anything to commend in even the best and noblest lives. The Master saw beauty in the plainest, homeliest people. He saw gleams of saintliness shining in the most soiled sinner weeping in penitence at his feet. Then we cannot think of Jesus ever speaking of the faults, blemishes, and mistakes of people. He saw and spoke of the sins and follies of men with charity and compassion, wishing to save them. It was the abounding, unwasting love in his heart that caused him to see in every one something beautiful, something at

least that might be made heavenly and divine by the help of God.

"She may not be brilliant in the common acceptation of the term," said a young woman of her friend, "and she is poor and unknown, yet, more than any one else, she has started me on the path of loving my neighbor as myself."

"How did she do it?" asked her listener.

"She doesn't say — she does," was the reply. "She loves her neighbor and it shows in her whole being. She never says sharp or bitter things about people, because such things never come into her mind. I once asked my friend," she continued, "how she could act her natural, sweet self toward those who were hateful to her. She replied that she knew if people understood their relations to the universe and to each other, they would choose the better part; and that she could not and would not obscure their vision by standing in the way of any light that might come to them. In other words, she simply doesn't recognize the hateful spirit at all. She puts it all out of mind, recognizing the mutual dependence of all upon each other, and their consequent duties and obligations toward each and all."

There is a great deal of practical charity in thus refusing to recognize the hateful things there are in others. Eyes are given us to see with, but there



is a fine art of not seeing things, that has much wisdom in it. Ears are given us to hear with, but there are many things we would better not hear. We would better not see other people's faults, or would better be as if we saw them not, seeing all men only as our brothers, to whom we owe love, patience, and help. We would better not hear the unkind or evil things said of us by others, for it would tend to make us bitter and to stir up angry feelings in us. It is a great thing to be optimistic about people as Jesus was, seeing in every man and woman the possibilities of future glory.

In the measure in which we have the love of Christ in us shall we see others as he sees them. Only the insight of divine love can recognize the possible splendors of immortal beauty in the faulty, blemished, and stained lives of sinful men. But such recognition is full of inspiration. The way to help people to better things is to see the possibility of better things in them and to tell them so. Many children are repressed and stunted in their growth and development by the atmosphere of criticism and depreciation in which they are brought up. There are homes in which the young never receive the slightest encouragement to strive after the best things. An artist said that a kiss from his mother gave him the impulse that started him on his career. The mother saw in her child's

rude attempts what she interpreted as gleams of genius, and instead of laughing at the crudeness of the first efforts, she kissed him in approval and motherly pride.

It was said of a pastor who had gathered about him a great body of men who were active church workers that he had done it by his fine faculty of appreciation. He sought always to find a man's gift and then encouraged him to use it. Then when the man tried to do what was assigned to him, the pastor never failed to commend the effort and encourage it. Thus he had developed and trained a body of men who are a strong force in the community and who owe all their capacity for usefulness to their pastor's inspiring appreciation of their gifts and efforts.

Again, if the kingdom of God is within us, the ideal of our lives will be only Christ. He will fill the whole horizon of our vision. He will be our blue sky and our starry heavens. We think of no other one in all the world's history as we think of Christ. We keep no other one's birthday as we keep his. This is because there never was another such person in all history as Jesus. A writer tries to imagine a world without Christmas, what the world would be if the glad day were blotted from the calendar. For if there were no Christmas, there would be no Christ — no incarnation, no



gospel story with its wondrous life, its heavenly teaching, its divine working; no cross and emptied grave, no church with its long centuries of gracious influence. The blotting out of Christ and all that Christ has given to us would leave appalling emptiness and darkness. Until we think of it in this way—as if we had lost it all—we cannot realize what Christ is to us. Take Christ out of all books, out of art, out of music, poetry, and literature, out of the gospel itself, and what would we do?

In his story "The Lost Word," Henry van Dyke tells us something of what it would mean to have Christ blotted out of our life. In recreancy to his sacred covenant, a young man, for riches, honor, and pleasure, sold the sacred Name which is above every name. He got his price. But when he needed help and comfort and tried to call the Name he once had known, he could not speak it, he could not find it. It was lost to him. Suppose we should lose that Name out of our hearts, out of our lives, and could not find it again, in our darkness, our struggle, our sorrow, could not speak it, what would we do?

But Christmas has not been blotted out of our calendar—we have Christ. The blessed Name is not lost. In our hours of joy everything is brighter and sweeter for us because the light of Christ's

face is our sunshine. In the hour of sorrow, the darkness is illumined by the stars of comfort which shine in the bosom of the night. When a loved one of ours dies, in our grief and deep sense of loss we find that the gate of the grave is only a window into heaven. On the morning of Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull's funeral, Mr. Howard tells us that he and Mrs. Howard and their two little boys knelt by the silent form and repeated together the prayer of childhood : —

“ Now I lay me down to sleep ;  
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep ;  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.”

Then as they all stood there in loving thought, looking into the dear face, one of the little ones, a three-year old lad, slipped his hand into his father's, and said, with wonder and awe on his young face, “ Father, is this heaven ? ” It was indeed heaven. Christ was there, and Christ makes heaven anywhere. What we thought was death is life. What we imagined was a desolate world is earth made new, the beginning of heaven.

“ I thought the winter was here ;  
That the earth was cold and bare ;  
But I feel the coming of birds,  
And the springtime in the air.

“ I said that all the lips  
I ever had kissed were dumb ;  
That my dearest ones were dead and gone,  
And never a friend would come.

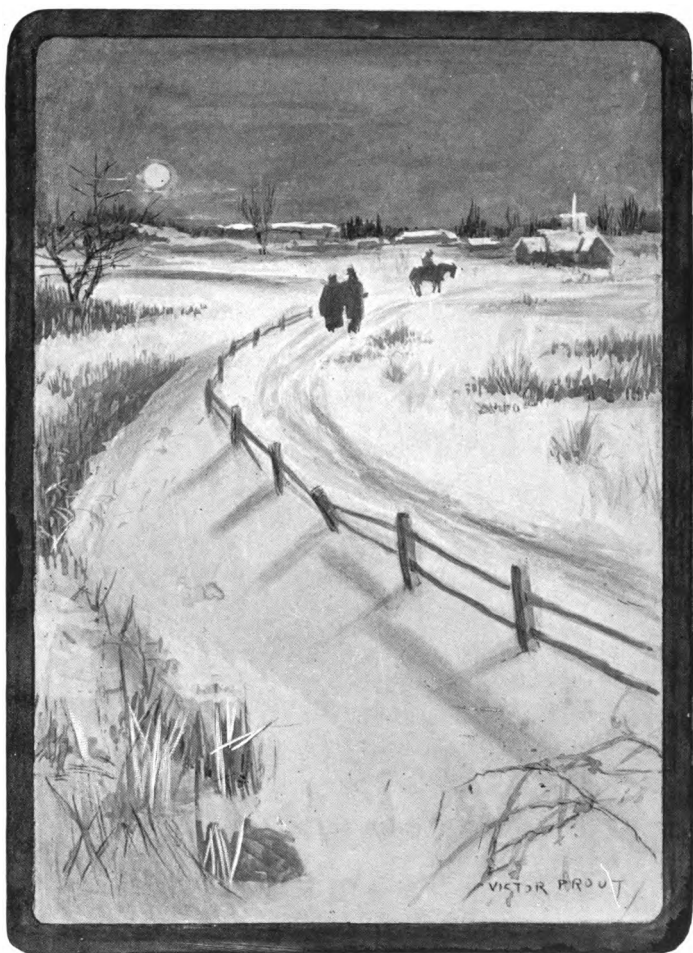
“ But I hear a voice as sweet  
As the fall of summer showers ;  
And the grave that yawned at my feet  
Is filled to the top with flowers.

“ Transfigured, lost to me,  
She hath slipped from my embrace ;  
Now, lo ! I hold her fast once more,  
With the light of God on her face.”

The kingdom within us is simply heaven coming into our hearts. Some people seem not to know that there is any other world but this. They live only amid material things and do not dream there are things that are spiritual. Then some happy day they have a vision of Christ. Some experience lifts the veil and shows them a glimpse of his beauty. After that, life is never the same to them. Life was not the same again to the shepherds after they had heard the angel's message and the song of the heavenly host, and had seen the Holy Child in the manger. It could not have been the same after that. Perhaps it was not changed in its circumstances and incidents. The shepherds went on with their lowly work. They lived in a

plain, humble way as before. They were still poor men. Their rank among their fellows was not changed. Yet what they had heard and seen that night made life mean more to them ever after than it had meant before. So it is that we are never the same after seeing heavenly visions. We go back again to our prosaic work, our commonplace tasks. Our work is not easier, our paths are not smoother, but there is something new in our hearts which transfigures all our experiences.

The shepherds returned to the care of their flocks after they had heard the angel's song and had seen the Christ-child in the manger. They did not forget their earthly duties in that night of holy rapture. When God gives us great spiritual joy, when we have seen Christ, and our hearts have been thrilled with his love, we are not to think ourselves too highly honored to return to our common work, however commonplace it may be. We remember that Jesus himself, after his glimpse of his Father's face in the temple at twelve years of age, went back to Nazareth, and for eighteen years continued his lowly life there, subject to his parents, — an apprentice, a carpenter, accepting his common tasks and doing them as cheerfully and as carefully as if they had been great miracles and works of wonder. When we have seen God it should make us even more eager than ever before to do the duties that belong to our place in this world.





A legend tells of a monk at his devotions to whom was granted a blessed vision of the Master. At the moment of his holiest rapture the monastery bell rang, calling him to duty without. It was the hour when the blind and lame and beggars came for their dole of bread, and this monk was almoner that day. At first he thought he could not go to his task, leaving the glorious vision. Still the bell rang on, calling him to go. Should he go or should he stay? Then a voice said, "Do thy duty — that is best; leave unto thy Lord the rest." He went away from his cell with its glorious vision, did his duty to the poor, and, returning, found the vision waiting and heard the words, "Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled." The bliss of communion must never detain us from the doing of duty. If we decline the service that we may enjoy the ecstasy, the ecstasy will depart.

If the kingdom is within us, every season of joy will leave us with a new access of gladness in our hearts. We are not happy enough Christians. There is in us too much discontent, too much complaining, too much fretting and anxiety. We become discouraged too easily. We are overcome too readily and do not live victoriously. The great truth which the Incarnation teaches us is that God is with us, living with us, dwelling in us. If this be true, whatever the experiences of our lives may

be, we should meet them with joy. A song in the heart makes all hard things easier, all heavy burdens lighter, all bitter sorrows less bitter. If we would but sing at our work we should not grow weary.

“ For the heart that sings,  
Hours fly on swift wings  
Of mystical rune and rhythm,  
And carry t e tunes  
Of a year of Junes,  
And the heart of the toiler with them.”

The inner life not only rules the outer, but it creates a new world, makes all things new. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan tells a pleasant story of a young man who had just come to know Christ as his Saviour. Walking with a friend in a garden, he stopped and plucked a leaf from a nasturtium plant, and laying it in the friend's hand, said, in a voice thrilling with emotion, “ Isn't that beautiful? I never knew how beautiful everything is until I gave myself to Christ.” The world had all become new to him because he had a new joy in his heart. He saw everything now in the warm light of the new love that filled and dominated his own life. This is true in a measure of a pure, sweet, noble human love. A friend changes all life for us. Emerson tells us this.

Oh, friend, my bosom said,  
Through thee alone the sky is arched,  
Through thee the rose is red ;  
All things through thee take nobler form,  
And look beyond the earth ;  
The mill-round of our fate appears  
A sun-path in thy worth.  
Me, too, thy nobleness has taught  
To master my despair ;  
The fountains of my hidden life  
Are through thy friendship fair.

What is true of a rich human friendship is far more true of the friendship of Christ. It puts new meaning into all the world. It makes all things new. It takes earth's discords and out of them makes exquisite music. It takes earth's failures and they become the beginnings of heavenly success. Ruskin analyzed the mud of London streets, and found in it the very elements and substances out of which our precious gems are formed. So out of all the wearisome and painful things of life, its toils, its sorrow, its hardness, its cruelty, God can make gracious adornments for our souls.

Let us trust God with it all. Everywhere there is something in the dreariest life that can become part of heaven's glory. If only we know Christ, if he is our Friend, if we are truly and faithfully following him, then all our life will become part of

our school for heaven. Then we will live here as citizens of heaven. Then the shining of Christ's face will make the path for our feet plain and light.



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