

## IMPRESSIONS BY THE WAY

opportunities of advancement, yet willingly yield to their inferiors.

For—so help us God!—some must be true. Some must be loyal to the original acceptation of the term 'life'; with which society life has nothing in common. Some will look to God first, and not to man. Some, in every age, have refused to bow to the Golden Image. Some accept the Divine definitions of wisdom and foolishness, and behave accordingly.

I have seen the man who had developed a clear conception of his calling, and who was following after it with might and main. I have studied his career, observed the privations to which he was called, and noticed how much of his life was solitude, and yet withal contentment and peace. And I have been forced into admiration, and an ardent desire to be like him has taken possession of my soul.

I have seen the woman also, whom all the enticing promises of full gratification that Society held out, could not move to exchange a life of duty for one of idol worship. I have watched her every step, and for her have felt the pang of being misunderstood, the sting of being ignored, the bitterness of being misjudged. But on the other hand I observed the equanimity she obtained as a reward of her faithfulness. And my heart has wished that her many sisters who skip through life with the airy step of the irresponsible, could but for a day sip at the cup of her sweet contentment, or observe the unruffled peace which hourly gladdened her heart.

I pity the society man who for any pusillanimous considerations feels tied to a path in life which is not of his own choosing. I pity much more the society woman, who, on account of having once donned the garments of fashion, considers herself bound to

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a retributive association with the vain. My soul pities above all the young man and maiden who are being prepared for that fateful entry into Society, that will mar their career, and imperil their relation to God and eternity. And while beholding the importance attached to it, the assistance promised, and the success assured, like so many baits to entrap the unwary, my heart has but one desire; namely,—that through the message I bear in common with all whose eyes have been opened, some of these deluded youths may believe that their calling embraces, not an existence of frivolous dependence on man, his accomplishments and his influence, but a life of sturdy devotion to the cause of advancement, and the hope of development by dint of high aim, independent effort, and firm maintenance of individual freedom of thought, allegiance, and purpose.

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THE disclosures that came to me as life went on and I studied the various phases through which I passed, showing how hard it is to know oneself, how impossible to know one's neighbour, I accepted as a message fraught with grave meaning. It does not do, I reasoned, to ride rough shod over the feelings of others; it is wrong even to think disparagingly of them. Both I saw being done around me, I myself having been thoroughly initiated into the art.

How shall we fathom our neighbour's feelings unless we first fathom him? How investigate them unless he lay himself open to us? How gauge them, unless we possess a criterion suiting his case? We accompany our fellow men in the way, but what more can we do than observe their peculiarities, as they do ours? Some are of flippant speech, irreverent, disrespectful; others grave, full of veneration, thoughtful, high-toned, and sympathetic. Some are of courteous manner, civil, and affable, while the mien of others is brusque, uncouth, and surly. Some are flurried, agitated, and irritable; others calm, accommodating, and complacent. Some are scarcely approachable, setting their faces as flint, and proving the hardness of their hearts; others are attractive, benign, and tender. Some are violent, heinous, cruel; others gentle, kind, and benevolent. Some are dull, unimpressionable, and of a foggy mind; others bright, fulgent, and dazzling. Some are officious, cringing, and fulsome; others retiring, staunch, and candid.

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Some are filled with fraud, surreptitiousness, and villainy; others are honest, faithful, and reliable. Some are fussy, bumptious, and bustling; others composed, collected, and staid. Some live for friction, denouncement, and fulmination; others for peace, commendation, and quietude.

Why all this difference? Is it fate? Were some predestinated to represent the flotsam and jetsam of life, and others foreordained to constitute the marketable ware? Were these peculiarities foisted on man while the period of his development was in progress? Are we to think of accidental, casual, fortuitous circumstances as having made him what he is? Has life revealed a double nature in its fruition; is it dispermous in its origin? Has there been a power at work, wickedly forestalling the outcome of man's growth? Are some men's hearts the natural recipients of good, and is doom hurled at others with the precision of a javelin? What are otherwise kleptomania, dipsomania, monomania, and all the other manias, but shackles forged in hell, prongs of the iron fork of fate between which man is caught to his damnation?

I found in reply to these questions of my spirit, that man forms a link in a chain. He follows his predecessor. From him he takes his origin, and, replacing him on the stage of life, that predecessor's image is in him reflected. It is this consideration that has led me to regard heredity as a most potent factor in forming an estimate of a man. In fact, I have concluded that to judge a man apart from his ancestral connection, is to judge ill.

Some spend their lives in frivolity, and appear to be virtually chained to their levity. Against their better knowledge they seem to persist in their wanton habits. Others appear to grope about in mental darkness, despite the surrounding effulgence of intelligence.

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Some seem as if they were spiritually dead, while others spend their days in sauntering this way and that on the brink of despair. Many are haunted by fears for which they cannot account; some have abandoned themselves to moroseness, while others again experience a craving for annihilation. And of all these together Society is made up, in the bosom of which pleasure, diversion, enlivenment, civilisation, culture, mutual benefit, religion, and virtue form the talk of the day!

The question is, how is man to look upon his natal outfit? In what light is he to consider it? Suppose it be prejudicial to him! Suppose it prove unsuitable! Suppose it should endanger his moral success! Is he to regard himself as intended to be what he was born? Should he acquiesce in the bent of his natural disposition? Must the kleptomaniac steal because it is in him, the unchaste female wreck herself because her nature is full of sensuality?—Or should the young woman who finds herself driven to a lonely pier or a garret window at dusk, consider that her father's whisky is trying to perform its fatal work in her? May such considerations be entertained?

Most certainly they may, and most certainly they should. It is man's prerogative to know his parentage, to enquire into the elements of his being. Intelligent man should know what his inheritance is. It is his duty to analyse the traits of his composition, and follow them up to their origin. He is by no means to consider his hereditary qualities as necessary adjuncts to his character. On the contrary, he will do well to regard what goes by the name of original sin, as extraneous matter which must first of all be resisted and cast off.

How different would be the aspect of life, if these matters were carefully considered. Why should ancestral vice ruin my character? Is it right, is it

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just, is it consistent with God's appointments? It is easy to sit in judgment on generations, and calmly to record, that for the sin of one retribution must be made by the following. But it is quite a different thing to belong to that following one. The heart rises in rebellion against such hypercritical jargon. The question is a personal one for me: Shall I be doomed and forego the promises of eternal reward because of the deeds of my progenitors? And I ask, is not God's work an individual one, and does He not take me as I am? Would the fact that the elements from which my life has sprung were vile, count with Him?

I have reflected on the fact that a boy's lying is due to his mother's mendacity, and his swearing to his father's profanity. And I have shuddered at the thought. Is it not enough that man's exuberance of impurity has resulted in his children's physical corruption, which drags their young lives to the grave? Must their souls likewise suffer? Must they submit to eternal loss because of a parent's indiscretions?

It is here that the need and import of character-building mainly comes in. The moroseness of one, the petulance of another, the trickery of some, the mendacity of others, the base inclinations of most, and evil propensities of all must be fought, must be invested, must be conquered, must be excised, must be overcome. All have their life's work mapped out for them here. Not one being 'clean out of the unclean', none can go free. The mistakes of former generations cannot be allowed to mar the eternal destiny of those who enter the arena of life with the resolve that, God helping them, they will be counted among the overcomers.

It may be safely assumed that heredity, and not the doubtful influence of environment, is the great bane of life. For does not a strong plant struggle into

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prominence even in a shady place? And does not likewise the development of those prove satisfactory who are well disposed, despite adverse circumstances? It is the bent of the mind, the original inclination of tastes, that decides life's career. It is that, therefore, that should be focussed first and foremost by all who know the purpose for which they live.

There is no doubt that this work ought to be accomplished while the sterility of advancing age is yet far off. The battle with hereditary proclivities should be waged by the young. Nor should parents be lacking in setting forth to their offspring the disadvantages of their birth, both physical and mental. If on any point there should be loving understanding between them and their children, it should be on this. It is the parents' duty, it is their privilege, to guide those that are born of them to a sound understanding of themselves, and to stimulate them to valiant conduct in the battle of life. They are the ones who know. Why should the child be driven outside the home circle to listen to a neighbour's dark suggestions, that brood evil surmisings, and never clear up the mystery satisfactorily? Ought there not to be a saving influence emanating from the parent's heart over the child of his love? Will it not conduce to reverence, to deep-seated respect? And should not parents under all circumstances render their offspring such assistance on account of their grave responsibility for their origin and their future alike?

I have seen children allowed to struggle on as best they could in the face of these staggering problems of their existence, the enormity of which nonplusses so large a number; and I have accounted it a great and cruel evil. The parent who understands his mission will be his children's guide. And especially will he

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habituate them to a calm, common-sense view of hereditary corruption, for which he, as transmitter, yet by no means as originator, is accountable to his progeny.

It is customary with those who reach the evening of life to cast a retrospective glance over the path they have travelled. It should be accounted one of the duties of those who see the dusk of earth's day stealing upon them, to review the history of mankind, in order to ascertain their true situation. And who, on so doing, can fail to see the culmination of evil? Or, with this in view, who can help being impressed by the seriousness of the struggle against the weight of hereditary corruption in which those are engaged whose present day is that of their youth? Yea, and who can entertain aught but feelings of sympathy and pity for them, and do aught but extend them a helping hand, so as to lead some of them to victory? There is a burden of practical benevolence resting on those who have gleaned a correct understanding of terrestrial matters. There is succouring and guiding, protecting and shielding to be done. The work of saving has assumed huge proportions. The young are bearing burdens which no generation has borne before them, and the most beneficent influence ought to be exerted over them by all who have human hearts throbbing in their bosoms. There ought to be a crusade preached against inherited corruption, filling the earth with light on a subject which is now of greater weight than any of the burning questions of the day. Man should wake up in the eternal interests of his children. Young and old should join hands to carry on the warfare against ignorance and deceit. Light should be sown for the righteous, and especially for the youth, by all who know how



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to bear the precious seed of truth. None, however corrupt themselves, dare face the responsibility of their children's ruin. Up then, O man,—up to the rescue of the young! Put your shoulder under their burden, and assist them up the hill. Who knows but that it may prove your own salvation!

## INFIDELITY

THE meaning usually ascribed to the term *infidelity* is traceable rather to a theological definition than to an expression of experience. The word is defined as 'disbelief in revealed religion': but its Saxon synonym, 'unfaithfulness,' indicates much more freely the true range of its application. As such it not only comprises specific forms of heresy, such as gnosticism, atheism, and the more general term 'scepticism', but likewise embraces every species of irreligion, and touches on the revelations of the life of professors, where, more than in hollow terms, infidelity stands revealed.

'Gnosticism', which questions the revelation of the Son of God, is of ancient origin; 'atheism', which in theory denies the existence of God, is more modern; 'scepticism', being naught but a classical term for the all-prevailing sin of 'doubt', seems bound up with the increasing inability of the human mind to grasp things spiritual, and may thus be relied upon as an indicator of mental deterioration; 'irreligion', as a term, represents the growing tendency of impiety and widespread apostasy; while 'unfaithfulness', as revealed in life, is the cankerous element that threatens the downfall of the entire structure of religion on earth.

'Infidelity', as a specific revelation, was not chronicled previous to the Christian era. The service of the true God, being confined to a single nation, and that a small one, was sufficiently exclusive in its nature to prevent wholesale diversity of opinion. There was one Temple where all parties worshipped; one system to

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which all held; one outward form of sacrificial service to which all stood true. It was when Christ had come to expound the meaning of true service, to burst the narrow bounds of interpretation, and open to the heavenly light avenues through which revelation might shine to the uttermost parts of the earth; when all nations, peoples and tongues heard the glad tidings of redemption, and were joined together in one church; when Satan was thoroughly roused to action to oppose the One who sat on the white horse, and went forth conquering and to conquer; when schisms were recorded, divisions reported; revelations of apostasy assumed definite forms distinguished by party names; and when sects sprang up at variance with each other, identifying themselves partly with the Christian faith, but deviating from it on divers well-defined points, causing the creation of formulated creeds—it was then that the term 'infidelity' was first invented and applied.

It was, in fact, when a beginning was made with 'teaching for doctrine the commandments of men'.

Ever since then this tendency has been greatly intensified, and it is now universal.

The nineteenth 'century of light' has taught man to pride himself on 'infidelity' as an act of daring, and brought about the fashionableness of scepticism, not, however, coupling it with aversion born of investigation, but with entire absence of understanding. Infidelity, therefore, has to a great extent become synonymous with total indifference. Men in our day call themselves atheists, agnostics (apparently adherents of the resuscitated gnosticism of yore), deists, and so forth, having a superficial knowledge of the derivation of such terms, yet generally not perceiving what they mean in their own individual cases. Man follows man, follows

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him slavishly—and therein consists chiefly his religion, or irreligion. He sees all parties holding certain tenets which draw a line of demarcation between them; finds no pre-eminence or attractiveness in one creed over another; and so follows the trend of circumstances, the ties of birth, relationship, social equality, or profession, having by them his form of worship defined.

Infidelity is the natural state of the unsanctified mind. As, however, that mind is revealed in each church, with every sect, infidelity is found everywhere, and, with error, holds universal sway. The grosser forms of it, called by high-sounding names playing up to the pride of the foolish, bring to light no worse features than the insidious apostasy that lurks about the haunts of God's faithful children like an adder in the grass. The revelation is one in meaning and purport; it inevitably leads to the condemnation for which its inception designed it.

It would appear that man in his present state is goaded on to infidelity by the very conditions of his life. In fact, it seems as if life itself gravitated towards heresy. The phantasmagorical views of earthly existence that are entertained; the whimsical conduct of religious leaders; the all-prevailing perturbation, increased by nervous debility; the lassitude experienced by many, proceeding from a distempered condition of mind; the phlegmatic state into which others have fallen, all these conditions of unsoundness conspire to induce man to forsake the service of his God, and worship himself. For that, faithfully analysed, proves to be the main feature of infidelity. Man accepts certain dogmas that suit his inertia, memorises certain postulates, gladly admits of the possibilities of a postern in Heaven's wall through which he may slip in, and borrows from his neighbour

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an undefined belief in the existence of a 'fata morgana', which will prove his beacon to the haven of rest, for which he may some time long. And, so provided, and not even asking for girders on which to rest his faith, hope, or expectation, he travels the road mapped out before him, and lays himself down to die when he reaches the end. When narrowly interrogated as to the seriousness of his conduct, he usually asserts—another tenet of his borrowed creed—that the inconsistent behaviour of the so-called religious has driven him to infidelity.

In my study of man I have viewed with alarm the widespread prevalence of scepticism. It fills one with the gravest apprehension. The indifferent are sceptical because desire for the pleasures of earth makes it convenient to be so; the thoughtful, because of the morbid fascination of doubt and the momentary elation of questioning. And I have asked, what cogent reason can there be that man thus prefers to yield up his assurance, and boast of a life of suspense? And the answer has come, that man's sight has been dimmed, that he cannot see. He is groping in the darkness of his own carnal desires. To these he has linked all that was high and holy in his aspirations, and the fusion has proved fatal to him. He has failed to realise the existence of a zone where God's life and his are intended to meet. He has lost the view of the extended Hand, outstretched for his salvation. His depravity has led him to prefer other gods besides Jehovah. The root of bitterness has been allowed unchecked growth, and landed him where return to his God cannot be accomplished except by the most complete abnegation of self.

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I saw that the only prophylactic against the dire disease of infidelity is the unostentatious following of Christ, whose example is given for 'the healing of the nations.' Of all other remedies recommended, none had proved efficacious. Even where infidelity was innate, or had been professed, I concluded that cure was to be expected from no other source. But, I reasoned, where is such following done?

And here was laid bare to me the whole extent of man's sad mistake. When long ago he surrendered to Heaven's enemy to serve a strange master, he lost the inherent power of directing his own steps. He became a forlorn wanderer over the waste of life. Yet in his calamity a Guide was provided, whom to follow would be to know the Way. Why then has he not accepted of this Guide? Why is it that even to-day, with all his qualifications for success lamentably diminished, he does not crave His assistance with all the ardour of his being?

There is no other answer than that man's vanity has obtained complete mastery over him. The triviality of his existence has thrown him off his balance. Man has reached a condition, which for its sadness scarcely allows of description. He prolongs his life from day to day to no purpose, if not to his positive hurt. It is vain to take a kaleidoscopic view of him, and so ease one's mind. He follows after a shadow, is surrounded by conditions of his own forging, has betrayed himself into an atmosphere of unreality, and has hold on nothing but his own base desires. These, bitter though it be to confess it, are the only realities of his existence. Is it any wonder that man has become an infidel? And now there is set before him the quiet, gentle,

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modest, unassuming example of the Nazarene. To obey God, to do good to his neighbour,—that is presented to man as the acme of bliss. To crucify and abhor self, to surrender all one's foolish ideas of propriety, and study God's appointments, to come and receive instruction in godly walk and conversation, and learn the foundation of hope—that will redeem his soul. To cast aside the mantle of spurious praise, acknowledge the voidness of his existence, declare that in everything he has failed, that nothing he has done has any abiding value,—that will save him.

And his future?—To finish his appointed time on earth as an example of goodness, patience, gentleness, faithfulness. To sustain from day to day by means of fervent prayer a life of devotion to the cause of God, which is to glorify His name among men. To spend his time in the fulfilment of his Maker's holy will.

I find that this it is, that gives that hold on life and happiness, on contentment and peace, which so many, to their own detriment, have failed to obtain. Man's pitiable condition is owing to nothing but the working out of his own designs in preference to those which are revealed by the promptings of the Spirit of God. Acknowledgment of his dependence, submissive behaviour, resolve to follow and not to lead, would ensure to man, and to every man, the perfection of joy. Peculiarities of disposition are no obstacles in reaching this end. Impetuosity and gentleness, ardour and sloth, intelligence and dulness, will all alike fall into harmonious correspondence with the Divine influence with which obedience will compass the souls of men. God more than ever, with greater pathos than before, calls on man to understand this one condition of the establishment of his peace, undertaking to show to its

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fulness the marvellous work of His grace in him, provided only he will yield his mind and follow his Maker's directions. The message of submission as a means to peace, to good understanding, and the restoration of broken relationship, is one which in every way suits the last period of time, the veiled secrets of which none are permitted to discover.



## FAITH

**THERE** opens to my view a vista of beauty and light, whenever the subject of faith presents itself before me. It differs from kindred subjects. It has a transcendency of its own. It surpasses the bounds of human knowledge, and yet has a peculiar attractiveness.

We talk of faith when we mean belief, or sometimes creed. We use expressions like 'the Christian faith', 'The Jewish faith', 'The Catholic faith'. Such terms are incorrect. There is no Christian, no Jewish, no Catholic faith, but there is a Christian's faith, a Jew's faith, a Catholic's faith. The free use of the word without proper understanding has reduced it to a platitude, and obscured its lofty signification. When we hear it heedlessly and almost pertly applied, our thoughts are arrested by such phrases as, 'But when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith in the earth?'—and, as descriptive of the body of overcomers in the day of the Lord—'These are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' And we wonder, in the light of such sayings, what Faith can mean.

According to sacred history, faith has been the stanchion of holy lives at a time when sects and creeds were unknown. We are reverently referred to the days of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, to view the works of faith at a period, when to talk of 'Jewish faith', as we understand it, would have been absurd. Of them, as of others, it says, 'These all died

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in faith'. The lives of these persons, despite their many inconsistencies, are held up to us as examples, clearly with the object that we should derive benefit from the view. We are thus guided by the two facts, that faith was exercised in the early ages, and that it forms an essential attribute of those that look for salvation in 'the time of the end'. With all this, however, the prevailing misconception of faith is enormous. Men are divided in opinion as to whether life is worth living or not. The point constitutes an ever-present subject of debate in thousands of hearts to-day. In fact, what time the exactions of business leave available, is by many given to the ever-recurring consideration of this question. It resolves itself into an arithmetical problem. Just as a balance sheet is made up to ascertain the success or otherwise of a business, so the pros and cons of life are weighed, and conclusions drawn from the process.

It is, however, one thing to see how man is living, and another, and quite a different thing, to trace how he was meant to live. And as general as is the former, so expedient and essential is the latter. For investigation will reveal the fact, that man's life was by no means to be likened to an account auditable by human shrewdness, nor yet to be conducted on commercial lines, or judged a success or failure by the standard of business. God had something far better for man, and has it now.

But now, if we say that that better thing designed by the Creator is a life of faith, we shall not be understood. Comparing our lives with those of the saints of old, the idea has obtained a footing that their faith consisted in their expectance of a Messiah, for whose coming they were eagerly looking, but whose advent changed the nature of their faith. In that way no comparison would hold good between their lives

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and ours. Still we read, without any restriction as to time or period, that 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'

Every thoughtful mind that has busied itself with the consideration of the subject of 'faith', apart from 'a faith', which is analogous to 'creed', will agree as to its intricate nature. Most of us, indeed, have failed to arrive at a clear and intelligent definition. Yet have we found some things tending to clear up the mystery by dint of meditation and practice combined.

To myself, who love to live in and with Nature, the azure vault of day, like the star-bespangled canopy of night, preaches faith. To me, the warble of the forest, like the voice of the meadow, speaks of faith. To me, the melodious babble of the brook, like the clatter of the cataract, chants faith. To me, the waving grass, like the smiling flower, whispers of faith. To me, life's path is beset with faith-prompting agencies. To me, faith is my soul's yearning for peace with my God, leading daily to rendition of the heart. To me, the orlive light of faith rises in answer to my prayer, for the mitigation of my lot, and the amelioration of my earthly condition. I am aware that, in my case, it is faith that is building a grand and everlasting structure, founded on the obedience of my heart.

God, in whose hand is our life, has created about our earthly existence an atmosphere of truth. Heaven's life-sustaining element has been transferred to this earth. The angels breathe it, and, where it is, they appear. They hold commune with the souls of men on the enemy's territory. Man, under the impulse of returning consciousness, has cleared the way before the angelic feet. He has purged his camp in the name of his God. So has his life become rejuvenated, and he himself lifted into an atmosphere more serene and pure than that which used to fill his lungs.

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In that atmosphere it is that he exercises faith. Before, the effort spent on it was fruitless, now it has become natural as breath to his mouth. He has found this exercise to begin on the confines of human possibilities, where man's impotence yields to God's omnipotence. Before, what he called faith, was effected by artificial inhesion; now the reality of it has interwoven itself with his very being.

And so he has been led to conclude that his faith, when its nature became genuine, assumed the form of childlike trust and implicit obedience. Yea, he finds that every act of faith on his part, has submission for its leading characteristic. His heart has been attuned to the angels' minstrelsy, the chief strain in which he finds to be delight in doing His pleasure whose servants they are, and not their own.

When this view of faith suggested itself to me as being after God's order, I noticed that it led to the understanding of another secret. We are told that 'Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.' Reading this superficially, I had found it an alarming statement. But a knowledge of faith explained it. God acknowledges but two motives for action, faith and sin. This, being interpreted, would mean that all actions spring either from obedience or from rebellion, sin being defined as 'the transgression of the law'. Whatsoever, therefore, is not of obedience (faith), is by natural sequence the fruit of rebellion, transgression, disobedience, i.e. sin. I found that this consideration gave me an insight into the Divine mind which became surprising in its effect. I had accepted a diversity of motives for action—I now noticed that there were but two. I had learned to ascribe men's deeds to love, generosity, friendship, benevolence, patriotism, ambition, loyalty, energy—or to hatred, animosity,

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passion, covetousness, disaffection, pride ; yet all these and many more resolved themselves into two constraining impulses, faith and sin. So God judges, so I should judge. So He classifies and ranks, searching out the underlying principle in each case—and so should I endeavour to do.

Then, I concluded, faith is not the Sisyphean task after all, that I had been induced to believe. Faith is the practice of good in all its phases. A life of faith, linking itself to the life of God, means a cultivation of the virtues that stand revealed in the Redeemer. And was not obedience the culmination of His devotion ? Was it not that which secured Him a name above every name, a seat at God's right hand ? Is it not recorded in so many words that this it was that became to Him the guarantee of His overcoming ?

And I reasoned : I am intended to overcome like Him. This is the highest aspiration of life. I have been cruelly swayed by misgivings founded on false information—but the consciousness of my calling has ever been present with me. And that calling is to overcome.

So I began the practice of faith in my life, taking it as a synonym for obedience. It explained to me Abraham's faith, which I am counselled to follow. He left his country and kindred, parted from his nephew, wandered about as an alien, suffered the privations of a pilgrim, finally crowned the exercise of his faith by the sacrifice of his son, in which deed his own life more than that of Isaac went under, and obtained Heaven's commendation and the title of Father of the Faithful. His seed has become as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven. Millions unnumbered have understood what I now understand, and have completed their journey on earth, which they had begun in sin, in

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implicit obedience to the same commandments, statutes, and laws, to which Abraham stood faithful.

With the reassurance that entered my soul, and the peace which stole over my mind, I observed that faith brought with it a mighty impulse tending to reform. The conviction took hold on me that those whose only motive for action is obedience, should practise reform in every department of life. They should search for the effects of their late doings, which were 'not of faith', and ponder over the chances of undoing what had been wrong. They should consider in how far habits had been developed tending to their own hurt, and vigorously apply the pruning knife for the removal of outgrowths. Yea, I came to the clear understanding that being weighed in the balance, which all have to meet, meant to these an investigation of the progress they had made in reforming their lives.

This view seized my mind with a powerful grasp. It brought me to an understanding of that veiled expression 'faith of Jesus', of which the angel made use to John in Patmos, a faith which His followers at the end of time were to display. And I saw how the Lord was calling on His children to establish a line of separation between themselves and those whose works are 'not of faith'. In word and action, in thought and deed, whatsoever proceeds from them was to bear the stamp of likeness unto the blameless Example. No more fruits of pride, of adulation, of idol worship, of indulgence, of exaltation, of vanity, of mimicry for them! The line of their conduct lies clear-cut before them. Like Jesus! Like Jesus! is to be their motto. Like Jesus! that He may be glorified in His saints. Like Jesus! that His true form may be revealed to those who yearn for a Saviour. Like Jesus! that the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven may know who constitute His

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retinue on earth. Like Jesus! that His human followers, experiencing the frailty of their frames, may take heart when they recognise one another.

I concluded, nor did the conviction leave any room for doubt, that this urgent call for reform of habits and customs was to become the leading characteristic of the religion of Christ, while Time is finishing its weary course. The professors of it will proceed from stage to stage, likeness to the Son of Man being steadily before them as the goal of their efforts. And my heart grew joyful as I looked on the possibilities of the future. So, I said, have arrangements been made for reaching the end. Here lies the solution of the many problems that puzzle seekers after truth. 'Be ye separate', says your God. Separate not in the way of 'touch not, taste not, handle not', but in this way, that the Christian's every action shall henceforward rest on one single principle, the principle of faith, i.e. obedience, and that so the inconsistencies of his life, which have been a stumbling-block to many, will all be removed. Living by principle will form his life into one harmonious whole, 'an epistle known and read of all men'.

What wonderful provision! The great controversy of earth is to end in glorious victory after all. God is working out His design, man's ultimate salvation is being made possible. Faith has become the great lever of action. By faith the sons of God will henceforward regulate their diet, dress, habits; by faith set their houses in order; by faith conduct their business; by faith maintain intercourse with a world of sin; by faith escape its pollution; by faith overcome its temptations; by faith await their returning Lord; by faith enter with Him into His rest!

## THE REALITY OF HEAVEN

TAKING Heaven to be the abode of God, I conclude from the earliest records, that according to the original order Heaven and Earth were not far apart, not so far, at least, as to render the locality of the one unknown to the dwellers of the other. And though I fully recognise the change in relationships brought about by the revelation and development of evil, there is nothing I can find to warrant the supposition that sin should have caused any change in the topography of the universe. This is significant, for if we can take this for granted, the relative positions of Heaven and Earth remain unaltered, and we may feel assured of the primeval proximity of the one to the other.

The danger exists that many of our ideas about Heaven may be the fruit of our private cogitations. Yet on no point do we run less risk of departing from the truth by adhering to our own notions than on this subject. For it is one pre-eminently fit for private thought. Man was not intended to live without the reality of Heaven influencing him at every turn of the way, and constantly moulding his thoughts and actions. In his every word and deed the close connection between him and the world beyond was designed to be demonstrated. The angels, though not his equals, but serving the Creator in a higher sphere, as he was doing on earth, were to be at his call for counsel and assistance. And God himself, by virtue of daily communion, was intended to be a reality to the sons of earth.



## IMPRESSIONS BY THE WAY

As it was, so it is now. Though diminished in stature, and deteriorated in attributes, it is the privilege of living man to feast on the same reminiscences of Paradise, Heaven's reflection on earth, that rejoiced the hearts of our first parents. The difference is nil, though the similarity of the cases be little understood.

The fact is that many of us have certain definite notions concerning Heaven, which we do not hesitate to call inspired. We have sat on the shore where the gravel of the mountain foot displayed the beauties of the onyx, the agate, and the opal, the exquisite shading of the jasper and the sapphire, laved by the diamond-crowned, liquid emerald, and over-arched by the mellow blue of gaseous lazulite. We have rested under the overspreading bowers, whose pendulous clusters mingled their sweetness with the ozone of the booming deep. And when the sun had set, and the evening breath was returning from the ocean, we have seen its ever-heaving breast aglow with the lustre of spontaneous life, which, undescribed in the records of man, rivalled the reflection of the starry heavens on its bosom.—At such times we have closed our eyes, and had a glimpse of Paradise. Yea, we slept, and in the visions of the night had a representation of Heaven placed before us. Then the veil was lifted, and things wondrous to behold were disclosed to our eager gaze.

These things were real at the time, vividly real to all—and the number of them is far larger than we suspect—who have ever been granted a similar revelation. However, most of us did what man always does with things uncommon, however specially adapted to his nature, namely, thought the vision unreal and delusive, and turned aside to the reality of the necessities of life. Notwithstanding all this, the fact remains that many men have notions about Heaven which they cannot

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shake off except by the suicidal processes of depravity.

I maintain that such notions are essential. They are divinely inspired, as part of man's outfit on the march to eternity. For God would not have us turn our gaze inwards and grow sour, or downwards and grow sad; but upwards, to be daily put in mind of the land of the future, and grow joyful and happy.

There are men, the influence of whose words has become powerful with the present generation, who place Heaven on earth, and change the eternity of the promised life into a proposed perpetuity of one's individual existence through an endless chain of descendants. These are they that force the look downwards towards the earth. Themselves chained to the dust, they know of no higher aim than to rivet to it the gaze of the millions. With this doctrine they combine the precepts of the gospel, pretending to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ. But they know not the One whose blessed name they assume. They have mistaken the object of His mission. Nor do they perceive the intent of redemption. The earthward bent of their minds is too strong for them to allow that the condition of man is hopeless, and cannot be ameliorated except by the creation of a new earth to take the place of our sin-worn globe. It is in vain that they clamour for the abolition of war and the forced establishment of universal peace. Their sophisms are untenable, though meanwhile by their subtle reasonings they help to intensify the sad delusion which is to come upon the whole world.

No, Heaven is not on earth, nor is life eternal to be enjoyed before the extinction of evil. I have marvelled at the impious audacity of such statements. How is it that men who professedly follow Christ, dare wrest

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His words? For that they do. 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' He says plainly; 'I go to prepare a place for you.' 'And I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Could utterances be more lucid or intelligible?

Some have gone to the other extreme, and separate Heaven from the earth by an infinity of distance, which excludes all knowledge or sense of reality. Many, fancying the existence of more Heavens than one, have, moreover, added to the one about which they seem most concerned, an antechamber, or place of detention for *post mortem* purification, anterior to entry upon eternal bliss.

And so Heaven has become a fictitious creation, and ideas about it have grown confused and wild. Yet all these things are attributable to departure from the Word of God, and the ignoring of personal revelation; they are the fruits of base attempts on the part of some to lord it over the souls of the many, for the sake of temporal advantage or the satisfaction of damnable vanity.

I repeat that man was not intended to exist without the hourly recollection of the reality of Heaven, by which he was to be both comforted and stimulated. And as it would have been absurd to advocate a life on earth in the original state without this feature as one of its essentials, so now is it cruel and unjust to suppose that he, whose responsibility for the future is not one whit changed, should be able to exist without this comforting and stimulating recollection.

It is for this reason that the fact cannot be too strongly emphasised, that Heaven is as real now as of old. It constitutes a factor of redeeming happiness, an ingredient of alleviation and hope in all man's earthly

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calculations: and the more man will dwell on the glory of the scenes beyond, the more distinctly will those scenes be disclosed to him.

Why should we be disconsolate, so long as our God continues to grant us individual instruction regarding the beyond? The lack of written information touching the future abode of the just—which, if more complete, would have been a fruitful source of yet more friction, and yet greater idolatry—is made good by personal revelation to those that seek for the hidden knowledge. Let no one regret the fact of a ‘mystery of godliness’. It must be, as long as the ‘mystery of iniquity’ prolongs its existence. And why should we be dependent on man? Literature abounds with spurious prognostications, clad in most attractive form—but why heed these? Why not abide by that, for the genuineness of which we can personally vouch, because our own eyes have seen, and our own ears heard?

Would that the seekers after eternal life would satisfy themselves as to the reality of Heaven! For does not on this depend their knowledge of the angels and their ministration? With some, certain uncouth notions about the denizens of Heaven have given rise to a modern form of idol worship, which the very frequency of its revelation renders sickening. With others again, lack of proper understanding has created a fear lest acceptance of the reality of angelic service might be idolatry. But apart from these extremes, how sweet is the realisation of Heaven’s ministry to those ‘that shall be heirs of salvation’. This definition is faultlessly worded. It comprises the class with whom the Spirit of God is busiest at the present time. The attention of all Heaven is centred in the lot of that number whose salvation is speedily to be revealed under circumstances of overwhelming interest. And it is to

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them that the angels of Heaven daily prove ministering spirits, sent out to their help, discovering to their view the realities upon which they build all their hopes; soothing their feelings, which the aggravating tenour of social life tends to wound; and stimulating within them the lofty desires to stand true to their principles to the end.

I would speak to my fellow man on these points with glad hope. At an hour when the voice of Time appeals powerfully to him, I would fain draw his attention to the indispensable sense of the reality of Heaven. I would admonish him to consider whether the unreality which has awed him, is not fictitious, and the reality a fact. I would take him by the hand, and lead him where he would hear the voices of Nature, the quaint sighing of the forest, the thunder's deep cannonade, the ocean's sonorous boom, and ask him to interpret their sententious language. I would show him the impress of the kiss the morning imprints on the glowing rock; the conflagration in the gold-rimmed clouds when the sun's disc dips into the ocean; the onslaught of Heaven's war chariots whereon God rides to battle, when inky blackness rolls beneath His feet. I would point out to him the glory of the snow-capped mountains, which arrest the very stars as they wonderingly gaze on their silent grandeur; and cause his soul to drink in the delights of the wood and the plain, of the rivers and the rills, of the flowers and the lichens, until he should be satisfied that the God of Heaven is a real God, and Heaven itself a real place, and that the Word of God and His revelation, His connection with man, and His promises for the future are all the result of real and practical, actual and tangible love, goodness and condescension. And then I should know that that man would never more question the sweet reality of Heaven.

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All this entails a yielding. Undoubtedly it does. Man's foolishness contradicts, and endures castigation rather than to submit. But the man who seeks after God yields, and feels the tension relax.

Not that blind acceptance is required, or unintelligent submission demanded. The message of assurance only aims at the peace of the seeking soul. It is the enquiry that satisfies the intellect. And, that at ease, the convincing Word of God claims room for a perfect work. Happy is he, who by honest search attains to that point!

Acknowledgment of the reality of Heaven is essential to those who are chosen to be witnesses of the dying moments of Time. Without it, their strength would prove insufficient to endure the strain of circumstances. There is a difference between passing through an ordeal with one's senses benumbed, and undergoing the same clear-brained, with one's sensitiveness whetted by the observance of every preparatory occurrence. But God has provided an ever-increasing intensity of assurance as to the future for those who will watch and be sober. He has made the reality of Heaven an instrument of sustaining effect in each one's case. Their eyes are, and ever will, be more uplifted to view the abode where their reward awaits them. The delusion occasioned by man's words is losing its hold on their minds. The stability of their characters is constantly increasing. They feed on the promises of God. Diffident and inclined to shyness before, scarcely able to stand to their profession, they increase in moral strength as the dangers of life thicken around them. And so are they prepared to be monuments of grace to the end of time.

The reality of Heaven is irreconcilable to the fashions, habits and usages which banish truth from the heart. Yea, and even preparatory conviction is thereby

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nullified in its effect. This is a serious consideration. Lack of sound understanding in these matters is too often attributable to conflict with the established order of God. Who could reasonably expect the Sovereign Lord of Heaven to make and unmake His appointments according to His creatures' caprices? Man's thoughts depend on the bent his mind has received by being allowed a large scope or a narrow. And only that man's mind is open to the Spirit's intuitive communications, who has cast away the trammels and shackles put upon him by man, and is breathing the atmosphere of unhampered communion with Heaven. Still, the assurance of the real and abiding character of the future is for everyone. God does not limit the influence of His promises to a few. He opens the eyes of the blind, and unstops the ears of the deaf without respect of persons. In fact, He seeks, and seeks diligently, for those who would escape the 'corruption which is in the world through lust.' And where He seeks, and urges man to seek, the finding is assured; and with the finding that sweet revelation which lays open the plan of God, and causes an abiding sense of His presence, and the reality of His provision for man; until faith shall be changed into sight, and all the idle fears of the heart for ever be allayed.

## REASONABLE SERVICE

POLARITY is one of the most prominent properties of human life. That which tells the story of the past, and belies the theories of the present, that which points the way as a beacon that has withstood the storm of sixty centuries, is the primeval object of life, to the trueness of which all Nature bears testimony. And this object is service.

I have found service to be the sustaining element pervading God's entire creation. By it development is promoted, perfection attained. The streamlet spends itself in perennial service. By reason of the sweetness it spends, the beauty of the flower unfolds to the light of day. The majestic forest and the tender grass, the mighty ocean and the bubbling rill give out and yield, nor is there any withholding with them. They exemplify the nature of life, which is activity in relation to and on behalf of its environment. Life feeds on life, as the insects, the fishes, and the denizens of the wood live on one another.

I have wished that man could retrace some of his steps and take a perspective view of his existence. Vanity and covetousness combined have brought him where he can see but one blank side of it. To this should be attributed the comatose condition in which the majority are found. Their activity has deteriorated into nervous excitement. Man of to-day hardly lives: he gasps for breath to sustain his existence. The millions are driven and hurried along the road—and to what purpose? Have they an aim, a conscious aim? Are



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they journeying towards a goal which their own eyes have descried, and for which their own souls long? Are their hearts glad with expectation, and buoyant with hope? Is there in them an impulse powerful, resistless, elevating, tending to perfection? Are they pressing on in the high road in which they will obtain the crown that is set before them? Is there satisfaction ahead, is there peace within their reach?

I feel deeply for mankind. I am one of the many. The teeming masses, the thronging multitudes are my brethren. There is one future before us all. Many have turned traitors to themselves and their calling. Some have spent their days in unholy practices inimical to their own and their neighbours' existence, and the earth has drunk the blood of her slain from year to year, from age to age, an awful libation to the goddess of human pride. Others have degraded themselves until they had to be shackled and caged, and thus cast away as the filth of earth. Yet the feeling within me, that we are all one family, is overpoweringly strong. The rain descends upon the good and the bad. God's sun rises over the just and the unjust. We are divided by morals based on convictions, which again depend on the measure of our obedience. Nevertheless is our destiny, though most of us should deny it, the same for all.

To my mind there is no doubt that this destiny is service. I can see none other. Investigation of the Divine plan does not permit me to draw any other conclusion. And that service is a reasonable one, and is rendered by man in the first place to his Maker.

Taking reason as the faculty which enables us to deduce inference from facts, to weigh possibilities, and distinguish between what is suitable and unsuitable to our existence; and ascribing this faculty to the action of

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our brain, the construction of which is the Creator's masterpiece, it is but natural to infer that God should know best what is reasonable. And we ought to press the naturalness of this inference, seeing that upon the acknowledgment thereof rests the success of our life. For if we grant that God's decision as to what is reasonable is final, and He appoints the service by which we are to attain the object of this life, we shall know that following the indicated path means that we shall reach the very ideal of existence, and no longer form part of a class that beat the air.

The conviction of Divine reasonableness is a most fruitful source of sound understanding and quietude of soul. Man was made a dependent being, yet did his sense of dependence only raise him nearer to his Maker. It spurred him on to seek communion with his God. This innate tendency was to prove the agent through which the perfection of his native beauty was to be worked out. Trust, faith, and love would it bring in its train. It would work towards the expansion and perpetuation of his life. The desires awakened thereby would be as so many orifices through which his substance was to imbibe the essence of outside influences, that would invigorate life within him. It would cause him to feel himself a co-labourer with his God, reaching out to the wealth of his environment for his own development, of which his Maker would have all the glory.

But I find that what was in the beginning, is even so to-day. At least, the possibility of it is there. God having never changed, and all the change being on man's side, it should be feasible for man, by returning to the abiding sense of Divine reasonableness, to re-assume the task of soul-activity, which will end in perfection. Let no one regard this inference as an

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idle tale. The purposes of God are to be reached. Who or what should stand in His way? And this is His purpose, that the spotless life of the God-man, Jesus Christ, shall be copied by mortals before the end can come. This will bring about the culmination of Divine appointments as far as they concern our earth. It will be the completion of the cycle 'from Eden to Eden'. The magnitude of the task seems appalling, but 'should anything be impossible with God?' It is He who means to accomplish what it would be futile for us to attempt. And the people in whom and with whom the work is to be done, are those who will return to the original institution of divinely-appointed service, acknowledging it to be reasonable.

Man, in his insatiable thirst for idol worship, once selected Reason as his goddess. He carried her personification in triumph through the streets of one of the great cities of earth, and proclaimed her divinity in solemn assembly. This was infamy, and rebellion against the God of heaven. It was creature worship as opposed to the law of the Most High. Yet there was in the impious movement an acknowledgment of the element of reason in the object of man's worship, by means of which a link is possible between Creator and creature, placing it above the level of orthodox religion in its common acceptance.

Reason forms the foundation of every one of God's appointments, the keystone of each Divine structure. Hence to be reasonable, is to be in harmony with God. Again, to be led by reason undefiled, is to be led by the Divine hand. God and man were intended to meet on the platform of reason, where every requirement on the part of the Creator was to be understood and consented to, and hence appreciated by the creature.

## REASONABLE SERVICE

Reasonable service, i. e. reasonable religion, is to be the crowning revelation of God's work for man. Man's salvation is to be worked out, but it includes the justification of salvation's plan. The allegiance of man has ever since Eve's fall been a subject of controversy between the God of light and the prince of darkness. Both lay claim to it: one by reason of sonship, the other on account of exhibited preference. The 'accuser of the brethren', in support of his claim, urges human unworthiness. In the assembly of the Sons of God he scouts the unreality of man's redemption. He argues that man, despite every effort on the part of heavenly agencies, is unfit for his promised inheritance. Show me the people, he says, that fulfil Heaven's requirements, that I may justify God's dealings with man. He maintains that Almighty power unrighteously and unreasonably snatches souls from his clutches. And on account of his scathing words in the courts of Heaven, on account of his pressing demands, for the justification of the character of the Most High, his wish is to be fulfilled.

This is a point of the greatest moment. Before all the creatures of Heaven and hell, the legions of angels that excel in purity and strength, and those other legions that excel in craftiness and cunning, God is to reveal a people on this earth whose qualities by common consent justify their salvation. With them the reason is to be found for removing the ignominious charge, that God would fill His home above with souls who by rights are the destroyer's own, but whom Omnipotence places beyond his reach. In them the name of their God is to be glorified, and His justice upheld before the rebellious host of hell. Investigation of their character is to wrest from the arch fiend's lips the confession that God is righteous, and righteous also the redemption of man.

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Satan allowed Christ's claims to glory. He owned that the God-man defeated him, and overcame his temptations. He gnashes his teeth at the fact of His victory, yet, seeing Him at the Father's right hand, has no objections to offer. But his eye is turned to man. A character inferior to Christ's will not bear the fiery trial. Each one shall be tested, and likeness to Christ alone will wring from him consent to a man's salvation.

Though man may stagger at the prospect of the test, there is nothing unreasonable in it. On the contrary, it is all eminently reasonable. The Almighty, from the period of the rebellion in Heaven accused of arbitrary actions, is to vindicate His character ere Satan and his angels are given to the flames. Full satisfaction is to be allowed them, in order that their own corruption may be fully proved to be the only cause of their destruction.

And man, who is thus to be upheld as a spectacle to the universe, what of him? No doubt his circumstances are peculiar, but they are not desperate. The full revelation of his likeness to his Redeemer is only feasible at the end of time. Of this he is assured. For he is not even to stand as he stands to-day, clothed upon with borrowed righteousness, forming a cloak for his imperfections; seeing that this is the very objection the enemy of his soul never ceases to urge. He has to stand in that garment of unsullied purity which is spun about him in such manner as to be clearly his own. The keenest scrutiny is to discover no flaw in the matter of his personal acquisition of it. Unaided shall he meet Satan's fiery gaze, unaided pass through the terrible ordeal. Unaided shall his character wrest from unwilling lips the acknowledgment that there is no objection possible in his case.

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I have studied this subject, until I have realised that even in this most testing of all God's appointments there is no defect. I have seen in it the seriousness of a Christian's position at the close of earth's history. The culminating point is being reached; and before the reality of it all, vanish such matters as pertain to creed, church membership, rites, and ceremonies. The bare truth is laid open before man, that positive likeness to Christ is demanded of him. Much as it may always have been essential to his soul's salvation, it seems to be far more so now. It is this that induces the man of God to divest himself at this stage of every encumbering burden. The call to separation is welcome to the sons and daughters of Zion. Business speculations, participation in politics, civil government, military tactics, social life, all present difficulties which appear insurmountable to those who are preparing for the great test. A likeness to Jesus is to be the criterion; their only hope lies in following Him.

And so it is that they betake themselves to copying His life, humbly and patiently. Their every action is directed towards that object. For it they sacrifice, for it they suffer; yet, while doing both, there is upon their lips a shout of prospective victory. Their practice of purity, love, obedience, submission, gentleness, and goodness is uninterrupted. They render to God all the service He claims, gladly acknowledging the reasonableness of His every requirement. They rest upon the commandments of their Maker. They have driven away doubt, and it has vanished. They have ceased questioning the authority of the Almighty. Where they understand, they give praise; where they do not, they worship. Their life is no longer their own: they have yielded it up to be directed by the Hand that gave it.

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And thus there is a return to the primeval state. Abstaining from all that is proved to lead to difference, assuming everything that is found to coincide with the ideal set before them, likeness to Jesus is being unostentatiously worked out by a few as the days go by. Their minds are bent on the one object; their every effort is strained in the one direction. And they have the promise that they shall be 'more than conquerors'. Every victory will lead to greater acquisitions, sublimer possibilities. They go on 'from strength to strength'. Their development, keeping pace with the perils of advancing time, is beautifully symmetrical, and satisfactorily general. They are on the way to becoming champions of the honour of God. They will ere long be giants in faith and devotion.

Satan is watching the course of these events with alarm. He knows the nature of the results. Not finding himself able to frustrate the ultimate victory of the One he has so long opposed, his study is to devise means to cope with the necessities of the hour. Whole legions are engaged in stunting the growth of God's saints. Their enemy surrounds them with a circle of evil influences. But as they keep faithful to God and their calling, and prayerfully commit their cases to 'Him that is able to keep them from falling', Satan's myrmidons can but form an outer ring round the angelic bodyguard which shields them unceasingly day and night.

Appalling though the danger may be with which the condition of these servants of the Most High is fraught, their reasonable service is the daily delight of Heaven. They are intently, sympathetically, lovingly watched by God and His holy angels. He whose Name they bear, whose character they are endeavouring to reveal, whose standard they are trying to uphold,

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is interested in their welfare, and the sanctifying influence of His presence hovers over them while they 'fight the good fight', 'run the race', 'put on the whole armour of God', wield the sword of the spirit, ward off the enemy's arrows with the shield of faith, rendering unto Him who has called them, and who stands surety for their overcoming, reasonable allegiance, reasonable obedience, reasonable service.



## HABITS

HABITS are man's habiliments. Their purity or corruption depends upon his nature. A good character is not disgraced by evil habits, nor a bad character adorned by good ones. This fact is not generally acknowledged. The alleged wickedness of some is represented as being relieved by praiseworthy habits, the professed righteousness of others as discounted by bad habits. I find an anomaly in this which ought to be settled to every one's satisfaction. To my mind, habits are the outcrop, indicating the nature of the mine below; hands on the dial by means of which the workings of the hidden machinery can be correctly gauged. Man's habits form his surface, and unless he be wholly unnatural, and there exist absolute incongruity between his parts, that surface indicates the state of his true, inner personality.

When I thus speak of man and his habits, I would have it understood that my words concern the individual who is responsible for his actions. There are millions who are not. This earth carries countless puppets, whose nonentity is ill disguised in a borrowed exterior. Of such, however, I would not speak. Sad as is the thought, their conduct defies definition, seeing it is arbitrarily regulated by impulse inferior to instinct.

There is danger that anyone touching on the habits of man should be cried down as a cynic. Yet I would not be ranked as such. I would be taken for a man grave and sad, whose spirit groans under the existing condition of things. There is no feud between mankind

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and myself. My heart is at peace with my fellow man. Nor would I be fastidious in my description. On the other hand I would use no euphemisms where the truth must be told. The influence of truth is saving, and my brother's salvation alone it is that prompts me to speak. I do not, nor would I, exalt man's microcosm. The interests of that abject species of idolatry are safe with the fatuous crowd. On the contrary I would draw attention to an all-prevailing form of mesmerism in which, I have reason to fear, most of my fellow men are ensnared; mesmerism which benumbs their senses, hampers their development, and endangers their eternal future for the pleasure of an ephemeral dream.

Why dally with the present grave situation? Why represent life as festooned with garlands of ethereal beauty, when man's strength is being sapped, and the adornments of his nature are being subtly filched from him? Why not rather rear the standard of truth, and expose the outrage of which God's masterpiece has become the dupe? Why not warn man against himself, and the environment of delusion into which he is born? Why not tell him that the air he breathes is vitiated; that the scenes on which his eyes rest are contaminated?

The most powerful hallucination to which man is subject, is the influence his own habits have over him. And when I see how mankind is being decimated by this prevailing evil, and realize that all habits are contracted by imitation, my soul grows sad indeed.

It is futile to consider man apart from the influence of his surroundings. Efforts have been made at demonstrating what he would be, if left to develop alone. Children have been sacrificed by denying them the opportunity of learning how to speak, in order that so human nature might show its inherent good and evil. But

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such efforts have failed. The habits developed by these unfortunate victims of outrageous curiosity were in no less degree borrowed than those formed in the ordinary environments of life, animal propensities prepondering no more in one case than in the other.

No, we must take man as he stands to-day, and consider him in his present relations to the outside world. It is only as such that the force of habits can be adequately estimated, their influence gauged, and the points correctly viewed where they contrast with necessity and stifle the voice of need.

It is habit that causes some nations to take four meals a day, whereas others take two. Habit prescribed to one people tea as a beverage, and to another coffee, while a third takes water with equal relish. Habit keeps certain classes in bed till the sun stands high in the sky, whereas other sections of humanity submit to the natural division of night and day. Habit induces to contortions of the feet with some, of the waist with others, regardless of consequences which mean lifelong discomfort in the former, lifelong suffering in the latter case. Habit bores holes in ears and noses, so that a circlet of gold with the civilised, and a bone ring with the savage, may dangle from the human face. Habit puts poison into man's mouth, which he chews or inhales, though he be acquainted with its deadly effect. Habit clothes gentlefolk in garments in which they can strut about and grow sickly, but never work and grow healthy.

Oh, why is not man natural? Why does he not strive to be himself? Why is he shackled, and his very movement impeded by those wretched ties of fashion, that crush his spirit within him? What has brought man so low that he could become a slave to these usages? Is not everything about man unnatural?

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Is it a venturesome suggestion that some mastermind is constantly engaged in devising what is wrong for him? Are not journals of dress and fashion in every shape and form agencies of personified impiety? Is it not a perfidious spirit that hovers about man, enticing him to discard his health, his happiness, the beauty of his existence, the statutes of his God, to his own hurt?

There was a time when I learned to use the soothing weed. It needed no greater effort to think tobacco agreeable, than it had cost before to pronounce mustard palatable. My early training had led me sufficiently far away from natural taste to make me appreciate nicotine. But, thank God, the time also came when my eyes were opened to the reality of what I was doing. And I made the return journey to my early naturalness, and learned to loathe stimulants and sedatives in which for a brief spell, through force of perverse habit, I had delighted. I had not contracted the habit of smoking from intuition or inspiration, but was suffering from an affection which, aggravated by the inclement climate of my birthplace, became chronic. My physician recommended that I should smoke whenever the weather was foggy. A physician recommending a boy, and a student too, to smoke! Was the man mad? Did he not know that thousands of my equals were being crippled for life by tobacco? Was he not aware of what the consequences might be in my case? Could he not calculate that my brain would be stunted, my lungs injured, my digestion impaired by the nicotine he proposed I should imbibe? He did not care! He only recommended me to follow his own example!

The idea that man should act prejudicially to himself is well-nigh incredible. I can understand that he pines away in a prison cell; can even credit what I have

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read, that he rots away in a dungeon. But where is the explanation of the fact that man's habits cause him to both pine and rot away in the full enjoyment of personal liberty? Is it anything but Satanic power that has enthralled my brother to this extent? And if it is such, and none other, should not a voice be raised against prevailing habits at a time and an hour so fraught with meaning as is the present?

I have learned of a movement against cigarette smoking amongst boys, the result of a scare created by public reports, showing that the health of thousands of youths is undermined by the pernicious habit. But what hope can I entertain of the success of such a movement? The searing up of one sore, if it ever should be effected, is not an adequate measure for the healing of society. Man must be roused to see the gravity of his situation. He must realise that his own flesh is decaying, before the worms can begin their grim task. He must learn that his family, for whose very life he is responsible, harbours death in its bosom. He must be convinced that his son trifles away his vitality in vicious practices, into which his father's habits have initiated him; that his daughter's life is ebbing away before ever it blossomed into its destined beauty, through the united agencies of her unnatural clothing, wilful exposure, and unnerving occupations. What otherwise will recall man from his inebriation, or wake him from his trance, that he may think?

Man must reform. Drastic measures are required for a well-nigh hopeless case. Man has criminally tampered with the powers of his mind. To-day he stands impotent before his God. Stupidity is stamped on his forehead. He eats and drinks, and wallows in the mire of his sensuality; and yet he is still considered a man, heir-elect of Heaven, destined to represent God