

first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Other things come afterwards. There must be a paramount purpose in life. As there must be a highest point on every hill—a point from which one can survey every side; so there must be an eminence in every life from which the various elements that enter into life can be seen in proper proportion.

In considering a subject, one must begin with the controlling principle—when it is understood, minor principles fall into place. Someone has aptly illustrated this by saying that if an attempt is made to pull a tree through a gate, the trunk must be carried through first; if one tries to pull the branches through first, they spread out and catch upon the posts. So, the details of life can not be wisely arranged until the main purpose is definitely fixed.

One does not become indifferent to other things because he puts his duty to God first; on the contrary, he sees more clearly and measures more accurately. The "pure in heart" see not only God, but good; it is self that befores the mind. No engineer could be safely trusted at the throttle if he were constantly considering whether it would pay him better to wreck the train or to keep it on the track; so, no one can be trusted to decide a question wisely whose mind is engaged in calculating the relative advantages of sin and virtue. The Christian son and daughter are not less dutiful; the Christian father and mother are not less affectionate, because both children and parents accept Christ's doctrine: "He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son and daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." On the contrary, the best children and the best parents are to be found in Christendom, and they are the best because we can do everything best only when we do first that which comes first. In God's plan, "every truth fits into every other truth."

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Fifth—Love, the law of life.

God is love, and Christ was both the evidence of love and the supreme illustration of it. The Man of Galilee gave the world a new definition of love. The world had known love before; husbands had loved their wives, and wives their husbands; parents had loved their children and children their parents; and friend had loved friend. But here was a love as boundless as the sea—a love whose limits were so far-flung that no one could travel beyond its bounds.

The plan of salvation is easier to understand, when one has tried to fathom Jesus' love. Sacrifice is the language of love, and in no other way could Christ so well prove His love as by His willingness to die that we, through Him, might be saved.

Love is enlightened—it is not blind, as some would have us believe. It penetrates into the dark places—into the prisons where light and sympathy can be carried; it discovers the sick to whom kindness can be shown; it discerns latent strength in those unknown to fame; it detects the weak points in the armor of boasting strength.

Love begets love; heart answereth unto heart. "We love him because he first loved us," has been said of all whom the world has ever loved.

Love is a growing force because it is the one weapon for which there is no shield. Carlyle, in the closing chapters of his French Revolution, presents an important truth; he says that thought is stronger than artillery parks and at last moulds the world like soft clay; and then he adds that back of thought is love. Carlyle is right; thought is mightier than force, but only because it is controlled and directed by love. Thought looks up to love as the flower opens to the sun.

When navies no longer mock the thunder with their roar; when armies no more shake the earth with their tread, "and the battle flags are furled"—love's roll call will still be sounded; love will marshal increasing hosts and lead them into a higher arena in which the energies will be employed in saving rather than in destroying, and in which life will be found instead of lost.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to

feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil. Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never falleth, but whether there be prophecies they shall be done away; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known.

"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Sixth—Forgiveness, the test of love.

At no other point is the contrast more sharply drawn between the precepts of Christ and the teachings of the philosophers of the non-Christian world than on the subject of forgiveness. While the latter contented themselves with rules and formulae Christ cleansed the heart of that from which evil grows.

Forgiveness is so important a part of God's scheme, so essential to Christ's code of morals, that in the model prayer which He gave for the instruction of His followers, He made our willingness to forgive the measure of our claim to forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

How often shall we forgive?

"How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven."

And to what extreme shall forgiveness be carried? There is no limit.

"I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you."

One of the disciples of Confucius asked him what he thought of the doctrine that evil should be rewarded with good; he replied: "If you reward evil with good, with what will you reward good?"

Then he announced this rule: "Reward evil with justice; and reward good with good." Which is the higher philosophy? Reward evil with justice? How can one tell what justice is if his heart is full of hatred, and he is waiting impatiently for a chance for revenge?

It is not until forgiveness has taken the place of hatred, not until love fills the heart—that one can frame a true definition of justice or hold the scales with a steady hand.

The doctrine of forgiveness was not urged for the benefit of the forgiven alone; it is necessary to the happiness of the injured party as well. There is no heavier burden than a load of revenge; it will break any man down who attempts to carry it. It is only once—or occasionally at most, that one has a chance to retaliate upon an enemy, but the spirit of retaliation does the one who cherishes it a continuing injury. It is a corroding influence, and destructive of the better nature.

It is for the benefit of the victim of the injury as well as for the punishment of the wrong-doer that God reserves to Himself the exclusive right to visit retribution.

"Dearly beloved avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Here we have suggested a means of overcoming evil, and it is the only way. If you cut down weeds, they will come again; you may cut them down as often as you like, and they will spring up. But plant something there which has more vitality than the weeds, and you will not only get rid of the constant cutting, but have the benefit of the crop.

So, if we would find a permanent remedy for evil, we must find it in the substitution of a higher for a lower conception of life, and forgiveness is one of the manifestations of the higher life.

Christ not only gave us a supreme example

of forgiveness when, in the very extremity of His physical suffering, He prayed for the forgiveness of those who were crucifying Him, but He gave us a reason for forgiving, which we are not as quick as we should be to recognize. "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Ignorance is often the cause of wrong doing. Even malice may be due as much to the lack of knowledge as to bad intent. Certainly, the one who entertains malice is ignorant of the joy of forgiving. The world needs enlightenment more than it needs the rod; and it is cheaper to prevent than to punish. To hate sin and to love the sinner; to oppose evil and yet seek to rescue the evil-doer, we need—we must have—the forgiving spirit of Him who, when asked to call down fire from heaven upon those who rejected Him, replied: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Seventh—Brotherhood, the Christian ideal. The natural and necessary result of Christianity, applied to life, is to weld the world together into an universal brotherhood—"All ye are brethren."

Christ repeatedly, aye constantly, impressed upon his hearers the fact that they were bound together by indissoluble ties. He condensed the Ten Commandments into two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and "thy neighbor as thyself."

The first defines man's attitude toward the Creator; the second regulates man's conduct toward his fellow creatures. The law, as proclaimed from Sinai, forbade killing, stealing, false swearing, etc., but the new dispensation, as presented by Christ, goes much farther—it removes the desire to do these things.

The doctrine of brotherhood was so deeply impressed upon the disciples, that they made it prominent in their exhortations. John even resorted to unparliamentary language in the warmth of his indignation at the thought that a man could love God and yet be an enemy to his brother. "If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

And in how many ways this hatred of a brother can be shown! Every act of conscious injustice is outward proof of inward hatred; and much of the unconscious injustice is proof of an indifference to the brother's welfare, scarcely less excusable than hate. The future is bright only because the signs of the times indicate that the development of the spirit of brotherhood is even more rapid and more widespread than the world's material, intellectual, and political development.

Dumas saw the coming of the era of brotherhood; Tolstoy sees it; it is evident everywhere. The spirit of brotherhood is working in each nation in the awakened public conscience; it is working abroad through the missionaries and the teachers. There is more altruism in the world today than ever before; "the middle wall of partition" which has separated man from his brother is crumbling, and with its disappearance will come a solution of the problems which vex mankind. Christ's platform of brotherhood is the broadest of all the platforms offered to men. There is no question today that it will not settle; and no question will arise in the days to come to which it can not be successfully applied. We may go farther than that and say that there is no question—domestic or foreign, which can be permanently settled by any rule that is not in harmony with this platform.

Man has learned how to protect his own rights; brotherly love will teach him to respect the rights of others.

Eighth—Faith, the spiritual extension of the vision; the moral sense which reaches out toward the throne and takes hold upon those verities which the mind can not grasp.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God;" without faith it is impossible to do anything else of value. Faith precedes works, as the plan precedes the house. The architect must have the design in his mind before he can put it upon paper; and he must put the design upon paper before the builder can give it material form. As the one who directs the construction of a railroad must have, in his own mind, a vision of the track winding up the mountain side before a tie is put into place or a spike is driven, so man must use the eye of faith if he would plan for a large life. He must, through faith, acquaint himself with the unseen world, for "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

"The just shall live by faith." "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," and man