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WILL J. ERWOOD

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ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

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DO YOU KNOW

We can realize Truth only as it is Made Manifest Within Our Own Consciousness; The Man Who Has not this Divine Element Within Self Can not Appreciate it in Others.

Truths are the Stars that Illumine the Night of Ignorance and dispel the Clouds of Superstition and Despair.

The Greatest Compliment We Can Pay to a Great Teacher is to be Our Real Selves—not Travesties on Him.

WILL J. ERWOOD.

BEING WORTH WHILE



HERE is a slang phrase which has become quite popular in certain circles and which really has a deeper significance than its users realize. To hear the average thoughtless youth say "*Aw, Be Yourself*" usually occasions no more comment than does a more or less flippant "*Good morning.*" But unwittingly enough, it may be, this expression sounds the very depth of real, practical psychology.

The great purpose of life is to develop and unfold individuals—as well as to preserve the race. The more the individual is developed, in the sense of completeness, the greater is the chance for the future generations. A great question looms up before us at all times—it is this: Shall there be a gradual and sure raising of the standard and types of human beings, or shall we be content to let matters drift aimlessly, to the gradual deterioration of humanity?

We are living in a very rapid age. This will be conceded by the most thoughtless of observers. The cry is for speed and yet more speed. The age of the radio, the airplane, the movie and the thousand and one things which combine to make the Arabian Nights tales seem like old wives tales, has come upon us with a swiftness that almost takes one's breath away.

This is an age of specialists—a great thing, but dangerous. Too often the specialist who starts out to be of great service to human kind becomes a mere faddist, a hobbyist, and insists

that his discovery is the panacea for all ills. The next step is to seek the enactment of laws compelling people to accept his findings and use his formula. And right there begins the period of revulsion.

The present day is the outcome of the past. The era of social, political, business and religious unrest is a result—it has come as the logical sequence of authority. The recognition of authorities in any line of thinking leads, usually, to oppression. Establish one school of learning as *the* school and very soon there will be an attempt to crowd all others off the map. Organize one church as the one and only religious institution, and regard its clergy as the final authority in matters religious, and we have the foundation of the auto da fe, or other inquisitorial institutions.

Specialists are jealous of all others. The surgical specialist is filled with envy and venom toward all who question his supreme authority—and so with the distinctive specializer of all branches of human activity. He who assumes to have solved the very heart of any human problem gets in the habit of spreading the personal pronoun “I” over so wide an area that it obscures all the rest of the human race and blinds him to the sight of any new fact.

With the coming of the specialist there has come a new danger, i. e. the classification mania. We are classifying human beings—placing them in certain categories and declaring, “you belong to that class and cannot be anything else.” Or “you have this tendency and it will stay with you forever.” Or, “you

have done thus and so, consequently you always will be addicted to such a course." It is by this procedure we fasten limitations upon our fellow beings.

We have had too much of the search for types. Education has, in many cases, resolved itself into the establishing of stereotyped methods of standardizing mental production. It has meant the creation of pedagogic molds and taking the youth of the land and crowding them all into the same mold—and expecting them to fit, willy nilly. And so we have round pegs in square holes and square pegs trying to fit into round holes.

The principles of mathematics are always the same. We cannot change the rule of threes. And the hemispheres of the earth are still in the same general location. The stars still gleam in the heavens, the sun and moon continue to shine in the same old way—but there are as many types, degrees and styles of thinkers as there are grains of sand. The real education should be a search for the individual. And it should be a means of bringing forth that individuality.

We are being confronted with this slogan, "*Live the Life Worth While.*" It is tantamount to saying "*Be Yourself!*" And this is said with all due deference to the niceties of life—with all reverence for the things that should be revered. But there, who can say what this scribe should reverence? And who can determine what should receive your homage? Answer that, please. It is so largely a matter of viewpoint, knowledge and understanding.

If the question as to what is worth while be asked, what shall be the answer? What con-

stitutes the "*life worth while*"? By what criterion shall we judge? Some will say, "*The religious life*." But again there is a question as to what constitutes a really, truly, religious life. There are those who will say "*serve God*." But most people who say that mean to participate in rituals and ceremonials—going to church.

There are many who will tell us that to be "*worth while*" is to be a success—meaning, have the ability to evolve a big business and make lots of money. But have you ever followed closely the career of the average big business man? Is he big in a really human sense? Does he, as a general thing, have an understanding of, or a sympathy for, the fellow who is not so successful as himself? Of what does the average big business man remind one? My personal answer would be . . . *a machine*. Yes, a thinking machine, relentless as a rock crusher and differing from it only in that the big business man has a colossal egotism which no thing of steel could have.

Big business men corner the market in food-stuffs. Human commodities, absolute necessities of life, constitute the lever by which they lift themselves high above the social and financial status of the millions who make up the rank and file of humanity. But can we say that such a life is worth while? Are they happy? Visit Wall Street and see the haggard faced B. B. M. when it appears that some one other than himself is about to have a look in at the profits. See Wall Street when the Bulls are raging—and again when the Bears are having their day. Watch the B. B. M. at the ticker.

Standing in one of the galleries of the

Chicago Board of Trade I watched a friend and a frenzied, milling mass of human beings during a slump in the market. Stocks dropped and as they did my friend's hopes fell like a plummet—tragedy walked abroad that day. My friend is gone—to give the change its poetic phraseology—gone to his reward. But he went thru the wreck of his hopes. He had had thousands of dollars, big business associates, fine home, everything—and it was swept away like a feather caught up by a gale. Was that the life worth while? But that day stands out in memory like a total eclipse of the sun.

Being worth while is a tremendous responsibility. It becomes necessary to have some kind of standard to go by, to ascertain what may be considered the really worth while course to follow. And how shall we arrive at that—who shall be the judge?

To be one's self—in all that the term implies—is also a mighty undertaking, a tremendously serious and engrossing responsibility. To be all that one may be, i. e. to achieve and live up to all of one's possibilities, is no small undertaking and requires no light degree of courage and perseverance. And yet it is the only distinctively honest course to pursue—providing that in the doing of this there is no infringement of the rights of others. Despite that possibility, one ringing sentence, handed down by Shakespeare, sounds thruout everything, viz. "*To thine ownself be true.*"

Concluded in December *Radiant Life*.

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THINKING FOR POWER

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EVERY normal man or woman desires power and the things which come as a result of having it. And most people are willing to make at least a little effort to acquire some measure of mental and physical prowess. Occasionally we find one who declares he has no ambition to be other than he is—but such individuals are comparatively rare.

Back of every man's energy there is the mind. And when we say mind we are not referring to the "group consciousness of cell life" as it is sometimes termed by "Behaviorists" and others of similar schools of thought. This writer is willing to concede that there is a measure of consciousness in every living entity—of that we have not the least doubt. But that there is something more to the mental man than the consciousness of groups of cells, we are just as sure.

When, therefore, we speak of the mind that is back of every man's energy, we are thinking of the conscious ego—the fellow who is greater by far than the mere body. Call it the Spirit, the Soul, if you will. It is that entity, conscious, volitional, self directing, that will survive the dissolution of the body—that something that Byron referred to when he said:

"But I have lived and have not lived in vain,

My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain—
But there is that within me which shall tire

Torture and time, and breathe when I expire."

For the purpose of this article we shall refer

to the entity, the ego, as the Thinker, i. e. the conscious, intentional and intelligent Thinker, the real "I" or the real "You." It is from that center that all of our effort comes. And it is this center we are interested in at present.

Looking about us at the progress of the world we see all manner of construction going on. Roads are being builded, great buildings erected, ships sailing the seas, trains traversing the continent and the very air being filled with airplanes. And as we observe each one we are confronted with this fact: Each is a result of a mental image—each was born of the mind. Someone thought out the design, evolved a plan of action, gathered materials and proceeded to complete the construction.

There is another fact that we are compelled to face, i. e. these things have been engineered, and done, by the men and women who had come to know their own power. After thinking out the design they conceived the idea, the conviction that the thing could be done—and it was. The special point is this: Anything can be accomplished by the man or woman who refuses to believe it cannot be done.

For thousands of years humanity has been making use of the old statement, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." It is quoted so much it is sometimes considered trite and not a little passé—yet it is the kernel of each man's power or weakness.

When we seek to measure a man we try to get some adequate idea as to the extent of his mentality. Brute strength is of value—but it pales to insignificance before the power of mind. So we analyze the mind—the mental

power. And what do we find? This:

The man who wins in the battle of life is the one who is sure he can—whose mind never harbors, for a single moment, the thought of defeat or failure.

The man or woman who is falling out of the race is always the one who entertains a lurking, subconscious conviction that "it is no use to try," because someone else has the luck, or the cards of fate favor the other fellow. And the logical conclusion is what? Merely, and inevitably this:

The predominant mental note, the clearness or haziness of the mental image, is the determining factor in evolving success and power.

An old adage tells us that "a chain is as strong as its weakest link." Trite as the saying is we cannot deny it. So we paraphrase and declare "a mind is as strong as its weakest, most negative thought." And this shows very clearly what course we should follow. Just analyze your own mind, scan your thinking processes, and see wherein you fall short. Suppose we help you do it RIGHT NOW. All right, let's go:

Do I doubt my own ability?

Am I constantly comparing me with someone else—to my own disparagement?

Am I constantly telling myself that I cannot win—I have no luck?

Do I continually decry my lack of previous opportunity and education?

Am I continually asserting my lack of memory—saying, "oh, dear! I cannot remember as I used to."

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Am I afraid to take a chance unless I see the result in my hand before I start? And, finally,

Am I forever looking for slights, favoritism to others, and signs that I am not appreciated at my full value?

The foregoing questions present rather a formidable array of problems for each one of us to solve. And they are real problems, let there be no mistake about that. But they are not insurmountable by any means—each and every one is a state of the mind. Each one is mentally builded and must, therefore, be mentally destroyed by the man or woman who would manifest power in any considerable degree.

There is a logical conclusion to which we must come. It is this: Our power is measured by the intensity and consecutiveness of our thinking processes. That power is great, or small, as we do, or do not, keep up a uniform quality of thinking, i. e. as we keep the mental operations up to a certain, well-defined standard. It is standardizing our thinking which gets us to the front.

By standardizing our thinking we do not mean “think as does every one else.” Far from it. Nor do we mean allowing ourselves to get into a mental rut. What we really mean is we must always think constructively and consistently. Every mental impulse must be of such a character as will express the power idea. A muscle, an organ or function of the body, may be materially affected by negative thinking—it may also be greatly aided by positive thinking.

The situation, then, may be put squarely up to each one of us in this manner. We, individually and collectively, make or destroy ourselves by our own thinking—and by what we think about what others think about us. Just think that over. And suppose we give you a table of affirmations, suggestions, to think over—and to get firmly fixed in the mind. Here they are:

I am fundamentally and potentially perfect.

My body is filled with, and expresses perfectly, divine energy and power.

Every height attained by others is within range of my possibilities.

Every function of my being is divine and is an expression of the divine law.

I am filled with cosmic power—it courses thru every atom of my being.

I am in harmony with the Infinite Source of life and power and I draw from an inexhaustible supply the energy and strength needed to fulfill the purpose of my life.

I am filled with an unquenchable courage.

I am possessed of a radiant and never-failing hope.

I radiate life, and health and power.

Say these over to yourself day after day. Never mind if those who cannot see anything but the old limitation idea laugh at you if they wish. Just laugh with them—you can afford to for they are blinding themselves to truths which you have received. Don't forget that "he laughs best who laughs last." In the meantime, this is the advice for you to follow:

THINK FOR POWER!

* * * *

THE DRAMA OF SUCCESS, III



SUCCESS is the goal toward which countless millions of men and women struggle, or of which they dream. Everywhere we go we hear the cry "make a success of your life." Travelling over the country this summer I have watched the onward progress of cities and communities which I have visited years ago. And the progress of these communities is the success of the people.

In Chicago the great drama is rushing on apace. In Minneapolis, first visited in Nineteen Hundred, the story is the same. Drama means action—and one has but to visit these great cities to see all the activity one needs. Buildings that tower above the earth like the monsters they are, give some inkling of what is going on. No play ever presented on the stage can equal the drama of life going on about us every day.

Comedy, melodrama and tragedy walk side by side with poetry and beauty, music and harmony. In the city there is the clamor of steel battering against steel, shrill whistles, clanging bells, rushing busses, street cars, elevated trains, and over all the whirl of the airplanes, combine to make one think of magic carpets and all the paraphernalia of Douglas Fairbank's "Thief of Bagdad."

One has but to read the brief life story of Rudolph Valentino to see the drama of success depicted in all its variety. Five years ago, unknown, practically. A few days ago The Grim Reaper steps upon the stage—a

swift stroke, and Valentino bids adieu to fame, escapes the tongue of the villifier, but in departing writes his name in vivid letters upon the scroll of life.

While the train bearing his body to Hollywood passed thru the country, I sat in a theatre in Minneapolis and watched him in one of his best known pictures. Unquestioned grace of motion, undenied skill and ability, a dramatic sense that even carping critics must concede, all flashed on the screen. Near by a young woman wept silently, in front of me a strong man bowed his head and unrestricted tears stole down my own cheeks, unashamed and free. Why? Because of death? Not at all. I was seeing the drama of success—two acts in the play. One was before me on the screen, the other flashing westward toward Hollywood. The one was life, action, power—the other presented the measured tread, the silent form, the final curtain. Final? I wonder! It was the majesty and wonder of life, and the uncertainty of the play which the Divine Director will call for next, that made its impression upon me.

Success is not in one thing—it is not the outcome of one thought. And yet it is. That is, those who would succeed in any undertaking must never lose sight of the goal—that goal must be so absorbingly interesting that nothing will swerve the individual from the path. He who would be a success must be bigger than criticism. He must be greater than faultfinding and discouragement—in short one thought must dominate his mind, and that is the thought of winning.

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Progress is the keynote of life. It comes as a result of man's desire for new things—as the outcome of his effort to solve the problems of existence. Without the right kind of desire in the heart and mind we do not get anywhere.

The greatest gift of the eternal powers is the note of interrogation in the mind of man—the eternal questioning. We grow because of the curiosity which causes us to question the why and wherefore of things. We advance because we develop the power of comparative analysis—we see things as they are, dream of them as they might be, and then evolve a design whereby we can make them better. We think about that a while and then put forth the effort that brings it to pass.

How many thousands of men looked out across the sea and wondered what might be there, before Columbus ventured forth? How many watched the waves of the Atlantic before Cyrus W. Field set out with his trans-Atlantic cable? How long did people climb over the Hoosac mountain before the engineers conceived the idea of the famous Hoosac tunnel? And for how many years did old Father Knickerbocker complain of the congestion of traffic at Brooklyn Bridge before the Hudson tube was made a reality?

Progress comes as the result of necessity—nature forces us to advance. And woe betide those who are standing in the way of progression. No juggernaut of ancient history was ever more relentless than the wheels of human progress.

The habits and customs of yesterday die hard. Tradition is a severe taskmaster and

relinquishes its hold on people not without a struggle. Our tendency to revere that which was and discount that which is, the while we ridicule that which is to be, has played a mighty part in the drama of human success. Tradition has ever been the villain in the play.

God picked men for certain positions, we have been told. The men of wealth have been selected by the Supreme Deity to take charge of the money and property of the world, hence we are admonished to accept our lot as divinely sent. And that is where we are prone to rebel and rightly so. The man who thinks at all has gotten out of the habit of laying the blame for conditions upon God.

Laws and principles there are. To conform to those laws will bring certain results—to disobey them produces an entirely different sequence. We are face to face with the problem of deciding what is conformity—and what is disobedience. One man tells me one thing is wrong—yet, if I do that thing my whole being is athrill with life and joy and hope. Another man says that a certain thing is right—but if I follow his advice I suffer misery of mind and body and fail in my endeavors. Which shall I follow? And from which course would it be possible for me to play the most important part in the drama of success? And whose law shall I follow—man's, or the divine?

Decide as we may, this fact stands out clear and distinct. We have our part to play. Shakespeare was right when he said "All the world's a stage" and intimated that we are all players.

We are. We are part and parcel of the drama of success, whether we will or no. It is written in the scheme of life that we must take our place in the drama. It only remains for us to make ourselves worthy of something more than a menial part.

Out of the past the present is born—today is the progenitor of tomorrow. What I thought yesterday makes today what it is for me; what I think today gives assurance of what the next day shall bring forth in the way of personal advancement or failure. The thing that is within me is the determining factor in shaping the results of my life. And so we find the place where success begins for every individual—it is within the mind of each one.

The individual is the sum total of all the experiences and impressions encountered along life's way. What have been those impressions which have left their mark upon us? They color our individualities—lend a certain something to us as personalities. Suppose you take stock of the materials in the mental laboratory and see what you find there, comrade. You'll get a foregleam of what lies ahead, if you do.

We grow to be like what we think of most. Memory is a part of the mind—when memory is at its height and we are indulging in recollection, we are living over the scenes and experiences of the past. On what do we dwell most—the pleasant or the unpleasant? Is there somewhere in your mental picture a soul's sanctuary, a comrade whose smile causes the mouth to turn up at the corners? Is there a bit of scenic beauty associated with

kindly friendliness? Or is there the thrill of a voice, the golden melody of which is like a haunting wisp of light athwart the path of life? If there is all, or any of this, then I beg of you "think on those things." You will find life enriched. And your part in the great drama of success will be greater by far.

* * * *

You can think big thoughts just as easily as you can little ones.—THE FRA.

* * * *

Resolve to know thyself; and know that he who finds himself loses his misery.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

* * * *

I hold it true that thoughts are things
Endowed with being, breath and wings;
And that we send them forth to fill
The earth with good results or ill.

That which we call our secret thought
Speeds to the earth's remotest spot,
And leaves its blessings or its woes
Like tracks behind it, as it goes.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

* * * *

THE WORLD'S BIBLES — HOW TO USE THEM

(A Lecture given in Plymouth Church)



Someone who was very wise made the remark that books serve two purposes—one, to set the mind of man free; the other, to lock man's mind as though in a prison—and anyone who is familiar with the history of the human family can well realize that there are innumerable instances wherein the mind has been imprisoned by the mere reading of a book. It is not so much the reading of the book itself that causes the imprisonment of the mind of man as the attitude of mind in which the book has been read or the set of mind which causes the man to regard the book under consideration as containing the one and only proof that there is in the world.

Perhaps there has not been so much of this tendency in connection with any other book in the world as there has been in connection with the various Bibles of the world, because one of the strange traits of the average man's mind is the tendency to regard that which it has received as the one revelation from the great "I Am," and so it has come to pass that in the name of the Bibles of the world there have been many sufferings inflicted upon the human family, just as it has come to pass that in the name of the religious teachers of the world there have been many indignities heaped upon the brow of mankind. This is due to the fact that men are, as one great writer has said, in

the growing state so long as their Bibles are in process of construction, that just as soon as they have reached the point at which they declare their sacred books finished, they stop, apparently, all intellectual progress. While their religions are in a state of evolution, they are in a growing condition of mind. Just so soon as they declare the religion to have become a finished product, they begin to hedge and to assert their authority and insist upon the members of the human family accepting the particular interpretation which they are giving out to the world.

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Perhaps some may think it rather amiss when we refer to various Bibles and make the assertion that there are numerous Bibles in the world, because the average man has a very limited conception of the world's religious literature and especially a very limited knowledge concerning the Bibles of the world. Therefore the average man is in the habit of speaking of *The Bible*—with the emphasis upon the word "*The*." The average man is prone to regard that book that in his family has been regarded as containing the one revelation as the only book that can give the message which God Almighty has for mankind and as a result of this there has been that very apparent tendency to inflict punishment upon those who have a new conception of Bibles, of religions, of Gods and of religious leaders, because men are prone to get in an intellectual rut and when they have gotten there, it is almost an impossibility to get them out. Perhaps the one thing that man is loath to do is to admit that he may have made a mistake concerning his religion;

or that the man whom he regards as an authority may have been misled; or that he and his followers may have been in error concerning the revelations from the Most High. And so it has come to pass, as we have said, that men have strange views of the Bibles of the world; that men are very prone to put their hands upon the Bibles of the world or upon the one which they regard as THE Bible of the world and say: "It is all here"—and declare that God has given his revelation in these pages, that anything that comes from any other source must be disregarded and it is because of that tendency that there has been so much controversy between the religions of the world and between the Bibles that are to be believed by the members of the human family.

There is no other thing that has caused as much discord as that which has to do with the great book that has been adopted by a given people, because men have the attributes which they have accorded to the God of the Universe—in other words, men have read themselves into their interpretation of the power that men call God and a man who is jealous of his household, conceives a God that is equally jealous; a man who is prejudiced concerning his religious ideas has conceived in his consciousness an understanding of a prejudiced God; a man whose knowledge is limited concerning some of the many phenomena of the Universe in which men live conceives a God that can under no circumstances countenance any degree or kind of knowledge that has not already been impressed upon the mind of such an individual and, inasmuch as men have

a limited concept of the power which men call God, so they have as a natural consequence a limited knowledge of the volume which is said to contain the revelation of that God.

Now we will make so bold as to make this statement right here, namely, that there is no literature in all the wide world that has for its purpose the idealization of the human family, there is no writing in any part of the Universe that has been based upon a high ethical principle, that is not a part of the Universal Bible of the great God of the Universe; there is not a leaf nor a blade of grass nor a twinkling star in the Heavens above which does not constitute a part of the Bible of the Universe and wheresoever there is a truth that has come as a result of one of the Divine revelations as manifested to man through the phenomena of the Universe, it is a part of God Almighty's truth, and, so, we bear testimony to the fact that there are many Bibles in the world, that no one book can contain all of God Almighty's truth.

If a man is going to affirm that all of the revelation is in this volume here on this stand and there is none other in the world which contains a portion of that revelation, then, indeed, has man set himself against the revelation of the Universe around him everywhere; then, indeed, has man set himself against the revelation of every world, of every nation, of every religious body, of every great master who has ever lived upon the surface of the earth.

Centuries ago there were men who understood the great truths of the Universe, aye,

centuries so great in number that the average man has no conception of the number thereof. In the past there were men who read God's message and read aright and sent their voices out upon the waves of space in order that the message might be carried to their fellowmen. Some of these men stand among the galaxy of individuals who have illumined the highway of human progress and some of them have walked silently and quietly, leaving their influence wherever they have happened to go—their names have been forgotten but the intrinsic truths have gone on and on and on and are even now being recognized and regarded as new revelations when in reality they are but new presentations of world old truths and religious principles.

Anyone who is familiar with the literature of the world has some knowledge of the Avesta-Zend, that source of inspiration to Persian scholars for many generations; they have some knowledge of the sacred Vedas, just as they have knowledge of the writings that have come down from a past so remote that one can hardly conceive of the remoteness thereof. And now they understand that these writings were for their people to serve the same purpose identically that some of the later compilations of books were intended to do for them—and we are using the term "compilation of books" advisedly because this upon which the hand rests at this time is a compilation of books, gathered from various and divers sources and with a multitudinous message for humanity because the message is not the same to every human soul.

As you well understand, you can get out of God's truths only so much as you are ready to receive, and bear this in mind—the truths of the Most High do not come down to men—man rises until he is ready to recognize the great truths of the Universe. Those revelations which God has for the mind of man are not forced upon man against his will because that old adage is just as apropos as ever—“*A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still*”—and God Almighty understands the law too well to compel men to accept certain interpretations and revelations; rather does God implant in the soul of man that something that says to the man: “Come higher, rise on the wings of your research in order that you may understand the truths that are for those who seek.”

That story with which you are all familiar viz.—that incident wherein an ancient ruler caused an excavation to be made and over the mouth he had rolled a mighty rock. It was right in the way of travel and men came and looked at it, as they will upon that thing the cause of which they do not understand; and men passed it by making circumlocutions in order that they might avoid the necessity of removing the boulder that was there; berating the Overseer of the highway, no doubt, because there was this obstruction, and finally there came a man, who was a man after God's own heart, and this man looked at the boulder and said, undoubtedly, to himself: “I can pass it by but there may come the blind and the lame and they may find it difficult to get around the obstruction,” and so he rolled away the stone

and there at the bottom of the excavation was a package and it was marked: "For him who rolls the stone away."

The watching ruler sent out and had the man arrested and brought before him and he asked the man: "Wherefore hast thou done this thing?" and the man told his story and said that he feared that there might be those coming whose progress might be stayed by the obstacle and he rolled it away that they might not suffer.

There are few men in the world who are ready to roll the stone away. They would rather say: "Because men have traversed a certain territory, we are going the same way." They do not realize that a man may go East or West, North or South, and that man, if he travels long enough and faithfully enough, will arrive at the same destination if he will carry himself as a man should. They do not realize that the great privilege is for the man who dares to step aside from the beaten path, the man who dares to think, because it is such men as these who have made light come into the world.

And, so, we would that you understand that there is a way in which these various Bibles of the world should be used—and there is a right way and a wrong way. No man has a right to say: "*There* is all the truth that God has given to the world." There were billions of men and women who had lived before there was even the slightest intention on the part of the human family to compile writings as they are compiled in this book; there were millions who had passed away from a civilization as

illuminated as yours today long before there was any attempt to compile writings such as you have here. There were masters who lived before there was a Galileo, before the man of Galilee, long before there was a thought of imprisoning God Almighty's truths within the pages of a book. And, so, it is wrong to say: "This is THE word and beside this there is nothing," because the man who says that is a man who stems the tide of progress and would interfere with the spreading of the effulgent glow of God's holy light.

You have a right to your Bibles, of course, but you have no more right to your Bible than has the follower of the Lord Buddha of India to his. You have a right to your Bible but no more right than has the follower of some one of the great masters of the past the right to the Bibles they have loved.

It is hardly necessary before an audience of this kind to speak of the well-known fact that the word which you have translated "Bible"—means something more than just a book. You are familiar with the "*ta Biblia*" of the past and, if you are familiar with the history of the human family, you are aware of the fact that writings in the early days were regarded as sacred—all of them—whether you are speaking of the writing that was done on papyrus when Egypt was but young, or whether you are speaking of the various hieroglyphs and other forms of writing that were in the world.

It matters not whether a man with a quill in his hand inscribes certain ideas or laboriously with a stick engraves them on clay and then

hardens the clay in the sun, the fact still remains the same, that in their opinion writings were sacred, and it was, as you well understand, after the passage of centuries that the thing became "*ton Biblion*" or "*The book*"—the one in all the world in which God had written his truth.

Aye, but never a Bible was written by the hand of man that revealed to mankind so great a message as that revealed by the frail petal of the rosebud, never was written a book by the hand of man that revealed to man so much of the glory of God as the smile upon baby lips, as the innocence that shines out through baby eyes, as the something that looks out of a mother's eyes when first she nestles her babe to her breast. You talk about the Bibles of the Universe. It is no wonder that long before the day of the Man of Galilee they were beginning to revere the idea of the Madonna and the Child, it is small wonder that they reverence the holy privilege of motherhood as they do, small wonder that they speak as reverentially as they do in the presence of the divine mystery of life—the wonder, the majestic wonder, the marvelous wonder of the ages—that thing revealed by motherhood and that subtle something that passes from mother to child, making each understand the needs of the other. And, so, there is controversy between the Bibles. Men are quarreling as to which one of the books of the present day is the right one. One man is interested in finding out whether the Revelation of St. John contains the key to all the rest, another is concerned about the Old Testament, another about the

New, one is concerned about the ancient translation, and each one is sure that the other one is entirely wrong.

What, then, should be done with the Bibles of the world? Should they be eliminated? There is no need to eliminate these various books which are sources of inspiration and information; there is no necessity for a man to lose the beauty that there is in the various Bibles of the world, whether you are reading the pages of the sacred Veda, whether your soul is pouring over the instruction from the Bhagavad Gita of the past or whether it is reading the pages of this volume on the stand, it matters not—there is no necessity for man's losing the beauty that is there. Ah, your psalm, the Twenty Third Psalm, when your lips move and say: "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,*" there is no reason for losing the beauty of the conception that man is immersed in God, that man is literally living in God, permeated by the divine fire, that it is just as impossible to separate man from God as it is impossible to separate yourself from yourself.

God is more a part of you than even the breath that inflates your lungs; God is more a part of yourself than is the blood which courses through the arteries of your body; God is more a part of yourself than the thoughts you think and surely a man's thoughts are closely allied to himself. What, then, shall we do with the Bibles? Shall we say that because this one does not contain all of the truth there is, that it should be eliminated, discarded entirely and that man should go on without a Bible? Ah, no, why should that be

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done because men have abused the Bible. You have only to scan the pages of history to see how they have abused the Bible. Human slavery was found to be just by recourse to the Bible; that thing known as polygamy was found to be absolutely correct according to the way in which men have read the Bible and that great crime against all ages which you now have in your land—Capital Punishment—a thing that is a mark of the uncivilization of the peoples of the world, has been justified by reference to the Bible and, not only that, but many other horrors, too numerous, have been justified by recourse to the Bibles of the world.

Then you say, if that is true, the Bibles are all wrong. Nay, if a man misunderstands a revelation of nature, it does not follow that the revelation is wrong; if a man says twice four constitutes ten, it does not mean that mathematics is wrong, it merely means that the man does not understand the thing he is dealing with; if a man says: "God Almighty has commanded that there shall be devastation," it does not necessarily follow that God is all wrong. Therefore, because men have misread some of the Bibles of the world, it does not follow that we should throw them away; rather let the men of research go on with their work—in other words, illumine the pages of these books, rather understand that these books are parts and parcel of the great evolutionary process by and through which God Almighty is bringing man to understand himself.

The men who wrote the Bibles of the past,

wrote as much as they knew; they wrote their understandings into the Bible, and so you have a Moses, a conception of the man who was a man of force, aye, the man who commands that his men go out and destroy. The Mosaic Law was conceived in a time when might was right. They were dealing with conditions then that were different from the conditions you have now. But you have not read Moses rightly for the simple reason that you have nothing that Moses wrote. The only thing you have is what somebody says Moses wrote at a certain time, just as the only thing you have concerning the Man of Galilee and his teachings is what someone said that someone said this Man of Galilee said long centuries ago. Never a word was writ by the hand of the Man of Galilee, never a word was writ, that you have indisputable evidence of, by the hand of Moses.

Whether you are speaking of that great Law-giver of the Hindus or of the Egyptians or the Grecian or other races of the world, this one fact remains—it is not the personality that you must build upon, it is rather that something that the personality was supposed to represent; in other words, it is that something back of the symbol that you have been studying that you must get at, that you must understand and believe. Ah, when a man is said to have made the remark: "*Peace, be still!*", when a man says: "*I am the way,*" you want something more than the mere words "I am the way." He who follows the great "I am," he who follows that power that men call God cannot go astray, but there is a great

difference between the man who speaks the word and the thing which the word represents, and so with the Bible,—it is said to contain God's word, yea it does contain some of God's word but only for those who understand how to read.

How should you approach your Bible? Should you approach it with the head bowed down and with a feeling of awe in your soul? Should you approach the Bible as though you were approaching that Holy of Holies wherein God is said to dwell? Should you make genuflections as you come into the presence of this Bible here? Should you say to yourself: "Now I am come to the study of the word of God. It is a thing about which I can have no opinion. I must merely read and accept things—God has thus commanded." God never commanded a man in all the aeons of time that have gone by to try to compile even a tithe of His truths within the pages of a volume. No volume save the Universe is great enough to contain the inscription of God Almighty.

Far be it from the one who addresses you at this time to be sacriligious, far be it from his intention to be irreverent, but, oh, the man who preaches that volume in that state of mind that so belittles God Almighty as to say that here is the only message God has sent to man has lost the very soul of the thing that he is supposed to understand so well. How, then, should you approach your book—approach it, in a manner that befits a scion of God's house; approach it from the viewpoint of the truth-seeker and the student; regard it as one of the evidences of man's desire and attempt to un-

derstand the God of the Universe; approach it as one of the stepping stones to an understanding of the religious attitude of mind of the people who lived in the past and say to yourself: "In so large a measure as I take the God that is within me to the study of that which God has placed through his representative men upon these pages, in that measure and that only shall I be able to receive therefrom those beauties which God wanted men to receive."

Should you limit God to a book like this? Sacred writings? Yea, anything that reveals truth to man is sacred. Should you regard that as the only one? Nay, because some of these truths, as every student knows, especially those who have made a study of the evolution of religions in the Orient—a large field to read as every student knows—find their parallel in writings that are older than anything in the compilation of that book there. Read all of the Bibles of the world, recognize the fact that a great master from the Orient has just as much likelihood of receiving and understanding the revelation of God as any man who has lived in the Occident.

It is a wonderful thing, a Bible, if it sets man's mind free; it is a terrible thing, a Bible, if it is used as your Bibles have been used sometimes. How assiduously men have scanned the pages of the Bible to find a justification for the belief in the damnation of innocent babes; how zealously men have scanned the pages of the Bible to find justification for burning human beings at the stake; how zealously they have studied the Bible in order to find justification for violation of some of the great facts

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of the world; how zealously men have studied the Bible in order to find justification for the assumption of authority and power and for the establishment of the idea that God has set a certain class of people aside to rule and regulate all the rest of the people. Ah, never a man who has usurped the power of his fellow man who did not find authority by his misreading of the Bible. Why, assuredly, at the time Moses lived, they said: "Thus saith the law—thus saith the law of God." There has been more misery caused by the dogmatic "Thus saith the law" than anything else.

What do we want then? Do we want to close the Bible? Ah, no. Do not you know when you close a room and exclude all the light, that it is only a question of time before it becomes a breeding place of disease? Do not you know that when you dam a stream, that when you stop the action of the current, you have made it a stagnant pool. Read the story of Europe, read the story of Asia, read the story of your own country, of the world, and you will find that in every age and among every people, where they have sought to close the revelation of God Almighty, suffering followed in the wake of that enactment. You are hearing every day of the sufferings of men whose message was said to contravene the message given by the Bible. Buddha was irreligious, Zoroaster was irreligious, Socrates was irreligious—aye, Socrates was an atheist in the estimation of those people who said: "He forgets the worship of the Gods."

Should you worship at the shrine of the Living God? Surely, but not by closing a book

and saying: "Here is the last word that God has given to man."

Then, you say, is there not a use for it? Oh, yes. Expunge therefrom all the bitterness. Take your Bibles and from them tear out the pages that record the bitterness, the oppression, the jealousy, the bigotry, the prejudice of God and keep only that which speaks of the love of God. Better a thousand times over that you have nothing but the Sermon on the Mount and the Twenty-third Psalm than that you should read some of that which arouses bitterness in the hearts of men.

Make your Bibles over? Why all the Bibles that ever have been writ by man, have been made by men; all the Bibles that ever have been compiled by men are the evidence of man's understanding and sometimes his pitiable misunderstanding of the laws of life. Can you conceive of a benignant kindly father of the Universe doing some of the things that are said to have been commanded under the old Mosaic Law—"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and "*Whosoever sheds the blood of man, shall his blood be shed.*" Did the Man of Galilee say that? Was it thus that the Man of Galilee met those who had made mistakes; was it thus the Lord Buddha met men who had made mistakes; was it thus that the various Christs of the ages have and will meet those who come to them in the time of spiritual illness? The Man of Galilee said: "*Go thy way and sin no more*"—"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"—"*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my*

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children, even so ye have done it unto me." Is that your message? Is that the message you have gotten out of this book? If you have not gotten that kind of message out of that book you have used your Bible wrongly. If you are bitter against those who have other interpretations than your own, you have read your Bible wrongly. How should a man be who has read his Bible well? Whether it is this Bible, whether it is the Book of Kings of the Chinese; whether it is one of the old Egyptian manuscripts or any other matters not at all, the man who has read his Bible as he should, should be more magnanimous than he ever was before. If you are not magnanimous, more just after having read your Bible, you had better never read it again. If you are not more gentle in your dealings with your fellowmen as a result of your reading your Bible, you have read your Bible to no purpose. The stories that you have read of the men of the past should teach each and everyone how to read the Bibles of the world.

Ah, there is so much to be said, there are so many things to take into consideration, but let us say — the pity of it that a man should look upon a volume like this, look upon that volume as containing all of God's word, that a man should be limited in his understanding of God, that he should turn to these pages and say: "Let us see what God says" when he knows the book was inscribed by men, printed by men, when he knows that according to the testimony it says twice if not three times that every vestige of what is called the Old Jewish Scriptures, upon which is based this volume

you have right here, was destroyed, only to be written again by one who was said to have received inspiration.

Ah, Good Friends, we would not rob you of the truths there are but when you go out to-night and you see the ray of light scintillating upon the snow yonder, when you look above and catch the gleam of the star, when you look at the horizon and catch the gleam of the morning sun, when you listen to chanticleer when he sounds the alarm in the morning, think, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you are getting a revelation from the Bible of God Almighty.

Can you make anything more beautiful than one of these infinitesimal crystals which have fallen in such abundance that the streets of your City are covered by that snowy garment, can you make that which is more delicate than those traceries that are penned by King Frost upon your window panes, can you make anything more exquisite than the leaves of the fern, can you conceive anything more fragrant than the essence of the rose, the aroma of the lily or that something that comes from the soul of the child who has found joy, eternal joy, because of something that has taken place in its life, can you think of anything more exquisite, and then say that you have found God's truth in cold black type upon the pages of unresponsive paper and these records that are as hard and unrelenting in many instances as the hearts of the men who have bound these volumes thus?

God's Bible is an elastic Bible, a growing Bible, a Universal Bible. It is made up of heart-throbs, of every glance of the eye,

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of every song that trills in the throats of birds, every smile on the lips of happy children, every tear that starts in the eyes of those who have known the kiss of sorrow. It is in the rivulet that runs in the spring time and tells of the friendship of Mother Earth.

God's Bible is in the flash of lightning, in the thunder crash; God's Bible is in the crooning lilt of voice that characterizes those who are going down the western slope of mortal life; Ah, God's Bible is in the swelling notes of yonder organ, in the swelling tones of the violin, in the heart of the earth, in the bed of coal, in the air—everything is a part of God's Bible and everywhere you go, everywhere, you find the law of life is manifested. The sun rises in the east, so you say, and sets in the west and in the rising and setting of the sun there is a wonderfully luminous page from the Bible of God.

Use your Bible but use it not to imprison your souls; use your Bible to set your minds free; use your Bibles to make you familiar with all the peoples of the world; use your Bibles to tear down denominational lines rather than to set them up; use your Bibles to amalgamate the races of the world into one great brotherhood rather than to separate them into warring factions. Your Baptists and Presbyterians and Methodists and Episcopalians and Roman Catholics and your Congregationalists and your Universalists and Unitarians and Spiritualists and Theosophists and all the other "Ists" there are in the world, almost without exception warring against each other but nearly all of them lined up against the onward march of the truth.

God does not care whether you call yourself a Methodist or not; God does not care whether you say you are a Spiritualist or a Presbyterian; God does not care whether you say you are a Roman Catholic or a Greek Catholic, whether you are a Congregationalist or an Episcopalian, God does not care. There is no evidence that he does. In no one of the Bibles of the world, and we are not excepting any one of them, does that Bible say: "Be a creedalist" in the sense in which creeds are accepted today. Every one says: "Do good to them who despitefully use you—be gentle—love your neighbor—be kindly." Every one of them has emphasized the need of human understanding and, oh, we pray that there shall come to all of ye, children of the Eternal God, so great an inspiration that your souls shall be illumined by the light of understanding, illumined to so large a degree that that light, that light which faileth not, shall shed its rays upon every subject that you are called upon to study, and when this comes to pass, we know that our prayers shall be answered when we pray that there shall come that kind of understanding that shall make every man know every other man as his brother, every woman as his sister, every child as his care, as the one upon whom he is to exercise gentleness and consideration.

Be Ye, then, children of the living light, inspired by God's truth, whether you get it from the page of a book, from the petals of a rose or from the laugh of the child, be inspired by the truth and read the Universal Bible.

* * * *

Dear Comrades:

Over the miles we are sending a word of cheer to the readers of *The Radiant Life* and their friends. Our hope is that you have had wonderful months, filled with joy, and that there are much finer things ahead of you—and that you will soon catch up to them.

The Editor of *The Radiant Life* has been for several months, and is still, on the wing, lecturing, demonstrating and teaching the principles for which this magazine stands. Calls for work are coming from all over the country. A visit to Minneapolis and St. Paul, another to Toledo, Ohio, to attend the National Convention, and a trip to Chicago and vicinity, caused September and October to be pretty busy periods—but we like it that way.

No need to mention the articles in this issue—they speak for themselves. But our December number—the Christmas Special—will be something to think about for a long time. Just note the subjects of the special articles for that issue. "*The Heart of the Christ.*" "*Christmas Ideals,*" "*Psychic Illumination*" and "*The Art of Thinking.*" In addition to these there will be the concluding article on "*Being Worth While*" and an article from "*The Master.*"

While speaking of our Christmas number—what better thing could you do than send *The Radiant Life* as a Christmas gift to the friend you love? For the price of the one subscription you, or your friend, can have our special Christmas number and the twelve issues of 1927. In what way could you give more joy and help for Two Dollars? Send in your order early—we'll insert a card for you, and send the magazine on in time for the holidays.

While on the subject of the holidays: Our four new booklets would make beautiful and helpful Christmas gifts. They are as follows: "*Consolation,*" a most comforting and beautiful booklet, "*Man's Spiritual Powers,*" revealing the superior man, "*The Cosmic Man,*" being lessons in Radio-

Centric Power, and "*Poems of Inspiration*," the finest collection of original and selected poems we have ever issued. Each of these books will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 60 Cents, Post-paid. Send orders early please.

Everywhere we go the interest in the work is great. Demands for classes, lectures, private consultation, all tend to show how hungry the people are for the greater truths. But one thing we would have you remember: That is, while the Editor will be out in the field much of the time, *The Radiant Life* will go right on. And the permanent address will be Rochester, New York. Send orders for books and magazines there.

Now comrades send in your subscriptions; urge your friends to do likewise. And do it NOW.

Yours for a more radiant life,

WILL J. ERWOOD.

* * * *

Never strike sail to a fear. Come into port grandly or sail the seas with God.—EMERSON.

* * * *

No one is useless in the world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else.—DICKENS.

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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., required by Act of Congress, of August 24, 1912, of *The Radiant Life*, published monthly at Rochester, N. Y., for October 1, 1926.

STATE OF MINNESOTA,
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Will J. Erwood, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor and publisher of *The Radiant Life* and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication.

1. That the name and address of the publisher and editor is Will J. Erwood, 108 Plymouth Ave., Rochester, N. Y.

2. That the owner is Will J. Erwood, 108 Plymouth Ave., Rochester, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are None.

(Signed) WILL J. ERWOOD,
Editor and Publisher.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of September, 1926.

MARTHA WOLERTZ,
Notary Public.

My commission expires January 3rd, 1931.

