AN ordinary reading of the Preacher's statements just before and immediately following our text is apt to be disheartening to many. Was it the purpose of the Preacher to teach a philosophy of passivity? He admonished his auditors not to lay up earthly treasures, not to serve two masters, to take no thought for their daily lives as to food and raiment. They were bid­den to observe the fowls of the air as examples of the wisdom of the heavenly Father in providing for all his creatures. They were exhorted to visualize the lilies of the field which toiled not nor spun. They were told to take no thought for the morrow for the morrow would take care of itself. Lastly, they were told to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all the desirable things alluded to as necessities would be added unto them.

2 Does daily observation prove this to be true? Does the morrow always take thought for the things of itself? Is progress made by ignoring mundane conditions and concentrating solely on the thought of seeking for the kingdom of God? If we take no thought to be provident, do we find miraculous supply at our command? Surely, the Preacher could not have meant what he said from a literal standpoint.
3 This teaching has been peculiarly welcome to a class of people who "tell the world" that they do not worry; that "everything works out right somehow," but we have observed in numberless instances that while they may not worry their placid souls, some one else does the worrying for them, and were it not for compassionate friends, the path of life would be far from smooth for them. We have in mind a clergyman who was always sure that God would provide, and personally lived a calm, unruffled life while, in the meantime, his wife worried herself almost into tuberculosis in trying to keep the proverbial wolf from pawing the paint off the front door. A wife worn almost to the point of nervous exhaustion did the providing while the sacrosanct cleric gave God the glory.

4 If this particular teaching of the Preacher were to be taken literally, his own organization furnishes a powerful contradiction to it, for we find that Judas was treasurer of the Twelve. Judas "carried the bag," showing that the Twelve had a common treasury, that in some way they accepted gratuities or donations, that they paid the bills for their various lodgings and journeyings. In other words, they took thought for the morrow and "paid their way."

5 If humanity were to accept the teachings we have quoted in their literal sense, according to the insistence of some irreconcilable "fundamentalists," it would be guided by a gospel of passivity, procrastination, laziness, evasion of personal responsibility, carelessness, improvidence and dependence, for in the last analysis, those who refuse to "take thought are always dependent upon those who do. Such a gospel would belie the further teachings of the Preacher himself, for he proclaimed most positively, (John, v; 17), "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Preacher always extolled industry. He used it as the motif of some of his Parables. The Gospel of Christ is essentially a Gospel of constructive activity—work in its highest sense, calling for all the forethought the participants may be able to exercise.

6 In the Jehovistic legend we are informed that God distinctly admonisht the allegorical "original pair," Ad-Ham and Eva, (Gen., iii; 19), "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." The gospel of work was establisht with primitive man and every investigation thru the science of anthropology proves that there has been no exception to the law. If we turn our telescopes upon the whirl of suns with their attendant planets and satellites we note obedience to the same law of activity and work. If we turn our microscopes upon the smallest forms of biological life we find the same in-
tense activity but on an invisible scale. If we look into the structure of the atom, we find the tremendous and almost inconceivable velocities of active corpuscles, electrons, and protons on a scale that amazes us beyond comprehension.

7 Macrocospically or microcosmically, every thing obeys the law of work and activity. But we also note one thing in particular, and that is, that everywhere we find obedience not only to the law of work but also to the law of order. Everything moves in its appointed sphere of activity. A planet cannot revolve about two suns at the same time any more than a man can serve two masters at the same time. The activities in the sphere of an atom of hydrogen must continue to be operative in the atom of hydrogen. They cannot become active in the sphere of an atom of a different element. Atoms themselves may combine to produce compounds or other structures, but the constituents of their own orbital spheres must remain true to form.

8 This, we believe, gives us the clue, as a revelation of our Mystical Principle, that in all our activities in life, we too, must remain true to form and type. Not one of us can, by taking thought, add one cubit to our stature. We shall require food tomorrow just as we required it today. That is obvious. We shall also require raiment just as surely. But no amount of planning as to food and raiment will make us one whit different from what we are today. And when we write thus, we are not referring to the physical vehicle, neither are we ignoring it, but we are emphasizing the Real Man, the Inner Self, the Spiritual Being or EGO. The Ego will and must remain the same, regardless of its outer vehicle or body, or the food and raiment allotted to it. This is the reason why we are advised to consider the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field.

9 Now we observe that all the kingdoms of life, while not necessarily "taking thought," do obey either instincts or Group Spirit control and store up provision for their sustenance. All thru the summer and fall, animals and birds make sure of food supply for the winter they know will come. Birds that can not endure winter climate migrate southwards, but they do so to be sure of food supplies. Plants let their sap run down and concentrate their life forces, that they may reincarnate again the following season. Everywhere we see the work necessary to maintain life. But we also note that the fowls of the air do not seek to become something other than what they are. Neither do the lilies seek to become something other than lilies. They all conform to the law of type and the law of work, and grow industriously according to their several placements in life.
10 Herein is the lesson back of the Preacher's words. Man, alone, in all the kingdoms of life, does not confine himself to trying to grow true to type. He tries to be several things at the same time. He does so because he is torn between the diverse tensions of his various desires. Man does attempt to serve two masters. He serves one master from whom he derives his daily bread, but he also serves another and more powerful master, SELFISH DESIRE. And man usually serves the first master in order that he may be able to gratify the whims of the second master.

11 The master, Selfish Desire, may not be criminal. It may not be harmful to others, dishonest or undesirable, but it is selfish because it almost invariably excludes the interests of others than its immediate servitor. In other words, the man who serves two masters—the most common of all human failings, is trying to do two things at once: he is trying to be one thing in order that he may be something else or do something else. Many a man slaves all day in business enterprise, in order that outside his business, he may pose as a social leader, a good sport, a good spender, a connoisseur of something or other or a patron of liberal arts, sciences or enterprises. None of these are bad in themselves. It is simply that they represent a division of interest, a wastage of energy and time, and lack of constructive concentration. When one has successfully terminated the business career, then one can devote the fruits of that business as one pleases, and with credit to himself and his community.

12 When the average business man endeavors to be at the same time the patron or director of some altruistic or philanthropic work, he is bound to view that work thru the eyes of a business man and the work will lack the touch of spiritual, altruistic or true philanthropic perception required to make it a success. This does not mean that a business man should never engage in "good works." On the contrary there is plenty of scope for him to do so, but the point is, that if a man happens to be a "shark" in business, no amount of philanthropic work is going to gloss his fishy scales. One thing at a time, done well, in unity of purpose and singleness of energy, is worth more than several things half done. Be true to your type, and take no thought what you shall be tomorrow in some other way or placement in life.

13 How many men are in business today, with the single thought of making that business such a success that all who participate in building it up with them shall also partake of the lasting fruits of the business? On the other hand, how many men can we count in our own acquaintance, who are engaged in business, hoping to turn over tremendous profits, in order that they may accomplish some scheme of selfish aggrandisement in other
fields. The first illustration is honest. The second is dishonest. That is why the Preacher warns us to keep our eye single—to engage in our work with singleness of purpose and absolute honesty, that not only ourselves but others, may be benefitted thereby. But if our eye is not single, and we are working with a double purpose, we are in reality "full of darkness" for we do not discern what the results will be when white light is shed upon our endeavors.

14 The analogies and illustrations we have cited apply principally to man as he externalizes himself. None of us are in positions to judge of individual sincerity of purpose, motive or deed as referring to others. But each of us does know the exact degree of his own individual sincerity. That sincerity is a property or quality that does not inhere in the physical being but is a part of the character and inherent nature of the Ego. Like all the hidden mysteries that lie beneath the superficial reading of Christ's parables, this mystery of the Ego is what lies beneath the superficial reading and understanding of the words used by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, in this particular place.

15 It is the human Ego that is immune to any effects caused by food, raiment or other external conditions. It can be affected by our desires, and that is why we cannot serve two masters as described, at one and the same time. If we work with singleness of purpose and with a sincere desire, of an absolutely unselfish nature, to accomplish some worthy result during our allotted span of life, we shall be approved by the activity of a good conscience. But if we work at one thing in order that we may appease our conscience by affecting something else which the world may mistakenly acclaim as a benefaction on our part, we have not advanced, developed or nourished the Ego one whit. We have set ourselves several steps backward upon the Path instead.

16 That we have developed the truth of our concept is proved by the question the Preacher asked, "Is not the life more than meat?" (Matt., vi: 25). Meat, as used here, is the synonym for food or sustenance. Food is the first requisite of physical existence. But physical existence terminates individually after a certain period. Life, however, does not terminate. The form in which it expresses, changes, that is all. Life is continuous. It is vastly more than meat. Therefore, it is far more important. We are destined to live our allotted span. We cannot hasten the end. We cannot retard it. By right living, we can enjoy it and make it useful to others and happy for ourselves. By wrong methods of living we can reap sorrow, sickness and distress. In both senses the morrow will take thought for the things of itself, for as we are destined to live a certain span, sustenance will be provided, by
ourselves if we are provident and prudent; by others if we fail in the battle of existence. But life will continue. Therefore, it is most important that the Ego, which is the factor within us that survives, be nourished wholesomely and adequately, and this cannot be affected by serving the master "Selfish Desire."

17 When we have held up to us as examples, the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, we are really shown what life, beauty and vigor develop when one is care-free. Neither the fowls nor the lilies take thought for the morrow by way of worrying about them. They are happily unconscious of them. They are doing one thing and doing it well. They exist in the eternal NOW. Worry breaks more hearts and backs and breaks down more kidneys than any other cause. And most all of our worries are the direct results of trying to serve the two masters we have described, at one and the same time. Nature did not design worry. Man invented that for himself. He invented it by trying to serve his two masters efficiently. Eliminate selfish desire, serve one master, and we will eliminate nearly one hundred per cent of the troubles of mankind, for all concomitant troubles originate from this primal source, troubles ethical, mental and physical.

18 There is another great lesson deep down beneath the surface of the words of the Sermon. It is the lesson of the impermanence of temporal things. They are impermanent because they are temporal. Nothing on this planet is permanent, if it seems to be, it is, after all only relatively so. Mountains that rear their heads to the clouds were once either level with earth's crustal surface or submerged beneath oceans. Rocks bear mute testimony to cataclysmic changes. Vegetable and animal kingdoms are undergoing continuous change. Man himself is changing and with his accelerated mode of living, he is speeding up his life so that the changes therein are apparent even to himself during his lifetime. There is nothing that is absolutely permanent within the range of human knowledge.

19 We are not incarnate merely to devote our time to chasing will-o-the-wisps of a transitory nature. That is why we are advised (Col., iii; 2) to set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. The best renderings substitute "mind" for "affection." We are not to ignore the earthly, else we would not have found visible expression in an earthly habitat, but we are to "set our minds" on things above in a concentrated effort to enter into knowledge and understanding of things eternal as distinguish from things temporal. This is the kind of knowledge that will advance us. This search for eternal things will enable us to understand temporal things and this is pure science of the
truest type. All science, consciously or unconsciously directed, tends toward the way we have cited. Science is the search for truth thru facts.

20 We must not be understood to insist that the business man shall have no other interest in life but his business, the clergyman no interest but his church, or the physician no other interest but his profession. Unfortunately, the fact that so many of each become self-centeredly concentrated in their work, is the reason why we have so many business, clerical, medical and legal pin-heads. Their one-track minds cannot contemplate the existence of a big, wide, active world or understand its requirements outside their individual interests. We must work concentratedly at that which appears to be our best individual sphere of activity and then take a wholesome, unselfish interest in the welfare of our respective communities and the improvement of our race and species. Mono-rail minds are drugs on the market. Babbitts are the town and city nuisances. Men and women of breadth of vision and understanding, with executive ability to back it up, are the leaders and are always in demand.

21 Our last statements are not in any way a contradiction of our former concept. The point to be kept in mind is, that we must carefully differentiate between the transient and the permanent, the valuable and the valueless. We cannot serve the two masters described. We cannot serve the master, Selfish Desire and serve God and our fellow-men at the same time. We cannot work at one thing in order to affect to be something else, in order to attain the gratulations of our fellows. The world soon finds such people out. Above all else, the Preacher strest the idea of not taking thought for the morrow, or for food and raiment and the necessity of of observing the examples afforded by the fowls and the lilies, in order to compel our attention to still another important particular,—the danger of over-emfasis of things which are, of and in themselves, of relatively little importance.

22 Under the guise of what they consider “good business ability,” men and women wear themselves out, exhaust their energy and initiative, break down their health, waste their vitality at ages when they can ill afford to do so, cause strifes, ill-feeling thru destructive competitive methods, disharmony and many times dishonor, in scheming for personal aggrandisement in tomorrows that may never come. Millions of people, daily, spend their energies, not in doing the things of the moment to the best of their several abilities, but in dreaming or scheming for things of little or no real value to develop in tomorrows that also—may never come. These are instances wherein the warnings of the Preacher do apply in all the power of literalness. For thousands of the
kind of people to whom we have alluded, tomorrow never does come. Tomorrow, may come for others, and does take thought for the things of itself, but it goes gaily on with little thought for those who dropt off, after draining their life energies in scheming over it.

23 Eliminating our servitude to the master, Selfish Desire, it is not only legitimate and praiseworthy, but also, a part of our normal, bounden duty, to strive for those things which the progrest intelligence and needs of the world will not permit it to dispense with or to go without. We are not here to live on and of the world like parasites, yet that is exactly what millions of people, taking humanity at large, really are. They are taking all they can get, and giving as little as they can. Parasites! Human parasites! We have a right to live and to take our living from the world only to the extent that we give to it of our best. If, after and in spite of doing our best, we are unable to give good returns to the world, the world like a good business partner charges it up to profit and loss. If we are able to give more to the world than we take from it, the world and all its inhabitants, in all its kingdoms of life, is vastly better because we lived upon it and the man or woman who has been truly welcomed by earth because of a noble life well spent, may be equally sure of a welcome into the invisible worlds regardless of what the ritualistic program of such welcomes may be. In helping the world, by which we mean, not only our fellow human beings, but all life that we see about us as we may be individually gifted, we shall help ourselves. However, taking thought for the morrow in over-emphasizing and overestimating the importance of trivial, impermanent, transitory matters of little or no lasting or real value, does not help the world, it does not even deceive the world. It holds us back, and all the reward we shall receive will be the reward we, in our sublime egoism, blindness and ignorance, award to ourselves.

24 Life is far more than mere physical environment because it is independent of it. The life itself is an active Principle. The method or way in which we live it may be modified and influenst by our environment and its vigor and essence is sapt to the extent that we allow a contemplation of our environment to become the major or dominant note in our mental attitude, for the life forces and activities in manifestation are affected far more by what we think than by what we do. We can concentrate on our environment and the things pertaining thereto to an extent that dwarfs, cramps, inhibits and almost strangles the free exercise of our normal vital constructive powers. Many a person is actually married to his environment. He cannot free himself from it. It is his own fault.
25 By taking too much thought for our environment we become crystallized into it and just as surely a prisoner of it as tho we were behind bars of steel. Every interest and outlook in life is affected or colored by it. Every activity is limited by the scope it affords us. Every thought has to be modified to meet its requirements. We are slaves to it and only the freeman, not the bondman can appreciate or even perceive truth, for truth makes us free. The Preacher surely must have foreseen all this.

26 At the time of the Great Sermon, living, was for the greater part of earth’s inhabitants a vastly more simple matter than at present. Especially in Palestine. There were two great classes, the wealthy and powerful, and the poor and weak. The latter far outnumbered the former. Each class had the same loves and hates and, economically, the same difficulties to contend with as we have today but on a far lesser scale. The Preacher, however, was presenting a Sermon, not for a comparatively small group in Palestine, but for a world. The Sermon on the Mount is the greatest sermon in all human history. It is eternal, for its principles are applicable to every race, time and locale. The Preacher could foresee, as we know from so many evidences throughout Scripture, the complexities of life as it was later to evolve. He knew that as great cities and world powers should develop, human life would be come far more difficult on a large scale. Human life has become increasingly difficult because we make it so by permitting ourselves to become crystallized into our several environments, taking too much thought for the non-essentials of the morrow. If we could be content to live one day at a time, happily, peacefully, constructively, we should enjoy a serenity unknown to us now. But we have elevated the master Selfish Desire to the rank of a god, before whom we all bow, and the courtiers of that god, his sycophants, flatterers and henchmen, are greed, graft, malice, revenge, hatreds, maliciousness, scandal, perjury, envy and strife, that make the hells in our individual lives and thoughts.

27 The Preacher, that greatest of psychologists who have ever come to the human family, gave us the antidote for all these troubles and misunderstandings of cosmic law, in the advice presented thru our subject text. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break thru and steal. FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO." Most people concede this to be, in the abstract, excellent advice. But the orthodox view of heaven is, that it is some far away, after death state. We must live out our allotted span of life and then wait until some sort of general resurrection before we can enjoy heaven. Even then, we are not sure of it on orthodox
grounds of doctrinal interpretation. One sect permits its adherents to go direct to their individual judgment. Another segregates the dead to purgatory or paradise, awaiting the finale. Still others contemplate a lengthy state of unconsciousness from which they expect to be awakened by a blast from Gabriel's horn. What foolishness! What sublime ignorance and egotism. These are crude and archaic concepts, atavisms from man's primitive ideas concerning the hereafter and some form of dogmatic judgment.

28 Truth makes us free from slavery to such concepts. We KNOW there is a continuance of life, consciousness, personality and individuality after the phenomenon of death and we know also that it is an immediate continuance, not a resumption of consciousness after an interim of some duration. We know this so well that we shall not waste the time to argue the point. And by the same methods that we have entered into the knowledge of this phase of the truth, we have also learned that heaven and hell are not after-death states of endless duration. We are judged—yes, by our own conscience, the Divine Judge within us. We pass thru purgatory,—yes, the purgatory of contrition, confession of fault, regret, and the desire to make restitution for misdeeds, and then we enter into communion with the higher knowledge that sets us surely on the Path and shows us how we may progress and discharge the karmic debt we have accumulated. This is Divine Justice. This is Divine Mercy, Compassion; Divine Wisdom.

29 Our individual heaven and hell is right within our own minds, all the time, and at the present moment. If we are living square with the world, we are living in heaven. If we are not, living square with the world and truth, we are living in hell and we have no doubts about it, and all the world seems to be against us and every hand upon us and we wonder if we, individually, have been chosen to bear the brand of Cain.

30 When the Preacher advised us to lay up treasure in heaven, he knew what he was talking about. Moth and rust cannot corrupt in the heaven of the mind. If our minds become corroded with the sophistry that passes for worldly wisdom, which is foolishness in the sight of God (1 Cor., iii: 19), heaven passes from our minds instanter, and we are consciousness of a distinct loss of some vital factor in our being. That is why so many excellent people are vaguely seeking today, something that they cannot define. If the thieves of pseudo-science and pseudo-theology steal our faith and sometimes our common sense as well, at least they cannot steal from us the seed of truth that can never be destroyed. We may doubt for the moment, and hesitate, but eventually, the
truth will spring up powerfully and eliminate all doubts from our minds. These conditions are what may beset the mind wherein no heaven has been created and no treasure has been stored.

31 If we have truly laid up treasures in heaven; if we have truly stored therein the truth that is precious to us, and on which we are basing all our knowledge in this world and our ideals for the world to come, that treasure cannot become corrupted, moth-eaten or stolen, because the heart of the man is there with it. Whatever our chiefest treasure may be, it is so because we have set our heart upon it. Whatever we have set our heart upon, has become a part of ourselves. We build ourselves into the interests upon which our heart is centered. We see this about us every day. In many noble enterprises, we hear it said of the founder, "This was his life work. He built himself into it. It is really an expression of himself." Even a so-called "materialistic world," without any pretentions to emotionalism or sentimentalism, endorses such works. It is a central truth of all psychology. We invest our heart's desire with our personality and our individuality, our characteristics and qualities, until we are known by it, and it is known by and of us.

32 In laying up treasures in heaven, we are not dealing with futures. We are dealing with the here and now. There is no need for impatience. It will not take incalculable milliards of years with a general resurrection at the end thereof, before we can enter into the enjoyment of our treasure and the sense of satisfaction and happiness that accrues from the idea of possession. But the beautiful thing about the treasure we can lay up in heaven is, that instead of monopolizing it, we normally desire to share it. If it is the right kind of treasure, we shall desire to share it. We shall be content to do so for it will be inexhaustible. The more we give of our treasure, the more we shall have to give. There will be no loss, for the supply will be cosmically abundant. This is not a "New Thought" mantram, It is a cold, psychological fact. The riches of the mind, inspire their possessor to a worldwide generosity and such a fortunate individual will find to his amazement that he has invested his treasure in a bank that insists upon paying him back far more than he put into it. Strange to say, investments in the "Bank of Heaven," put the investor in touch with the Source of all Supply, all Abundance, and pay an interest far beyond human comprehension. In fact we shall not fully appreciate the true value of our treasure in heaven until we have cast off mortality and entered into light, but that will not detract one iota from our enjoyment of it right here and now. The point is that our treasure is eternal We have it now, and we shall have it in greater comprehension hereafter, as well.
33 It is obvious to any one, that "where one's treasure is, there will his heart be also." The fact it is one's treasure is possible only because the heart has been set upon its accumulation. Treasure is what we value most. It is set apart in our estimation and evaluation from amongst all our other possessions. Treasure is valued according to individual temperament and proclivities. It does not always consist of money. It may be a collection of bugs and butterflies. It is what a given individual values most. But because he does value it most, he devotes to it the major part of his consciousness and concentration, usually to the exclusion of all else; often to the detriment of his family and those dependent upon him. This too, is foolishly taking thought for the ephemeral things of the morrow.

34 A man's heart being where his treasure is, shows us also, that his treasure is what he guards most carefully of all his possessions. He devotes a considerable portion of his time to seeing that his treasure is properly guarded and protected. He has it insured. He banks it if it is money. If it is stocks or bonds, he watches the ticker as tho he were counting off the passing moments of his life (which he really is doing), ready to grab the phone and instruct his broker at the psychological moment. At any rate, be his treasure what it may, he guards it with the best forces and energies of his life. His heart is there. But that kind of treasure cannot be taken over into the inner and better world. It has to be relinquished and that is hell. And for some time thereafter, the disappointed one lives on in a hell of mind created by longings it is impossible to satisfy.

35 Such a man as we just described lived in fear of loss during his mortal life. He entered the spiritual life in the consciousness that he had lost his treasure in fact. Could a Dante devise a more ingenious and efficient hell for such a person? Hell is IGNORANCE. Heaven is KNOWLEDGE. Ignorance is responsible for all that we commonly call "sin," sickness, disease and distress in this world. KNOWLEDGE is responsible for the dawning light by which we already have come to see that sin, sickness, disease and distress are unnecessary and not a part of God's scheme or of nature's. The more knowledge we develop, the greater conquests we make over these undesirable factors in human existence and environment.

36 Up to not so many years ago, humanity thought that disease was caused by demons, witches and supernatural agencies. In some parts of Europe, even in this twentieth century, some villages have beaten and even put to death innocent women and girls who were believed to have bewitched certain of the townsfolk. But, thankfully, these are remote instances, still, examples
of what ignorance can and will do even today. Knowledge has shown man that instead of devils and witches, it is bugs that cause the principal ailments and diseases of mankind: sub-visible microbic monsters, and it has shown man how to fight them by using them against themselves. Today, only a few diseases of importance remain to be conquered and research is hot on their trail and there is no doubt that the enemy will be trapt and brot under control.

37 Knowledge is Divine. It is Divine in its nature and character. The men who discovered the bugs did not tell us that while the bugs may have caused the disease, they were, after all, agents of God and that sickness was a "visitation of Providence," a "chastening by a loving Father" or the "will of God." They went after the bugs. Right here in this great City of New York, it has been discovered that crass poverty and slum living is not only unwholesome, creating undesirable citizens and spreading disease, it is a liability to the city itself. And now we have a proposal which has been, we understand accepted, to wipe out huge sections of slums, glose and insanitary conditions and to rebuild the plottage with healthy, sanitary model tenements where the poor can live in self-respect and become useful citizens, assets instead of liabilities. That is what knowledge can do and is doing. The ones who discovered this really obvious fact and were willing to back it up (having discovered it would also be a "good investment"), did not advise the denizens of the slums to "be content with that estate to which it had pleased Almighty God to call them." They did not insult the Almighty in that way. They went to the Mayor and proposed to do a godly work by wiping out the cancerous spots. Heaven, comparatively, will exist in the future, where hell has reigned.

38 Wherever knowledge extends, hell losses its grip and heaven takes hold. Sunshine succeeds glose. Light banishes darkness. Health ousts disease. Above all, toleration supplants bigotry. This last, is one of the hardest things to accomplish, for bigotry is ensconst in the mighty seats of orthodoxy and is hard to dethrone. It will be dethroned eventually, not because of a voluntary relinquishment, but because public opinion and increasing knowledge will demand its abdication. Knowledge is all powerful.

39 The man who has developpt wisdom and knowledge has created for himself an heaven of the truest type. He has laid up treasure where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break in and steal. Outside of that heaven the wise man cares for little else. The biografies of the great teachers and phi-
losophers substantiate this statement. The mass of humanity without true knowledge seeks to surround itself with bubbles of ephemeral pleasure, pathetic to the truly wise person. The really wise persons require far less than the unwise to make them happy. They find their happiness in an interior sense, inconceivable to those to whom their wisdom is "folly" and "dry rot." Wisdom is the sign of an evolved mind. Ignorance is the equally sure sign of an unevolved mind. Ignorance reigns in the homes of the wealthy as often as elsewhere, for the wealthy are usually blinded by the pleasures of sense illusion. And much of our greatest wisdom has emanated from obscure origins and the homes of the poor. This is another testimony to the true perspective and values in human life.

40 Knowledge, once gained, can never be destroyed. Even the mind unbalanst by misfortune or other circumstances, regains its equilibrium when free from slavery to mortality and finds it has never suffered any real loss if it has truly stored up real treasures. Knowledge can be and is taken over the abyss, into the worlds beyond, for our only purpose for mortal or physical existence, is to gain knowledge thru experience and the power of developing resistance to obstacles interposed in the way of obtaining it. Matter is the medium thru which the phenomena of resistance, accommodation, affinity, consolidation, opposition, reaction and action become chemical and physical facts. Our dip into matter or mortal expression enables us, as spiritual beings, to strengthen our spiritual fibre by engaging in these differentiated activities. The activities referd to express thru our physical activities in response to our mental reactions to definite impulses and urges.

41 All these physical and psychological reactions and responses the Great Psychologist knew. He was obliged to give his advice in terms "understood of the people" at the time, but he knew that they would be interpreted by the world at large, in due time, in terms of deeper meaning and value. The orthodox interpretation of the passages under discussion in this instruction usually is, that the real treasure consists in the "love of God." "Faith in Jesus the Christ," belief in atoning blood and a lot of other doctrinal ideas. They may be true, but not in the literal manner in which they are exprest. We cannot love an abstraction. It is impossible for any human being to do so. We must have some sort of visualization of what we love or believe in. Faith, is said to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. But at least even that definition implies something tangible to which the faith is directed. There is no use in kidding ourselves. Before we love God we must learn something about him. We shall never, while mortal, learn all about him. But
those who have sought him, have discovered him in every evidence of life about us. The mundane world itself is an evidence of his Presence and activity. It is an evidence of his creative wisdom. Everything about us shows design. For ages, races and nations have worshipt God as an ideal. Today, countless people are worshipping and reverencing him as a fact, as an essential revealed to us by science and philosophy. Knowledge is bringing us closer and closer to an understanding of the true nature of the ancient ideal.

42 Knowledge gained thru the search for God as revealed in every phase of life about us, is treasure that we will carry with us forever, and it will be constantly augmented. We may have to change our concepts every now and then and the reasonable man will hope to do so, for it will always be a change for the better. Every recovery in archaeological science, every discovery in science, every advance in progressive living, every triumph over the elements, brings us closer to God altho we may not recognize it as an approach at the time, for we are blinded thru our pride by the external features of the events. But sober reflection soon brings home to us the fact that we have taken another step forward upon the Path to Light.

43 In seeking knowledge, there are two paths. One is the purely academic, in which we incorporate no element of the spiritual. The other is the nature path, in which the academic and the spiritual go hand in hand. There is no conflict between them in this path. On the first path, we take text books and laboratory processes as our guide. They are both fallible and we have to reshape our concepts from time to time with the rapidity of phantasmagoria. On the second path, we take text books to see what man thinks he has learned: we use the laboratory to carry our researches still further, but we have the spiritual powers of intuition with us, and nature, as God in manifestation, for our guide, and we do not go far astray. We make mistakes, but we have far less to rectify. And many of the foremost scientists the writer knows, are among the most spiritually minded men, which accounts for their wonderful success in their chosen fields of endeavor and research.

44 At the present time and for many ages, the world has earned its distresses for it has insistently gone contrary to the Great Law. We are told to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things, (worldly emoluments and pleasures) shall be added unto us. The world seeks its pleasures and riches first. We forget the allegory of King Sol-Om-On in the Jewish Scriptures, which was to the effect that, being offered his choice between wisdom and riches he chose wisdom. And
then, as an evidence and proof of his wisdom, he also acquired everything else that he desired. In the oriental imagery of those Scriptures, Sol-Om-On is alleged to have received untold wealth, gems, power and prestige. Wisdom brings wealth if one desires it but the wise man seldom desires it. Wisdom brings power, for wisdom is knowledge digested, and "Knowledge is Power," strength, health and all that these can bring. A man is permanently successful in proportion to the degree of wisdom he has attained. The riches of wisdom cannot be estimated in terms of dollars and cents or of jewels and prestige. But the wisdom of Sol-Om-On's choice as a proof of his inherent wisdom has held its place in history for several thousand years. It means as much today and to us as when it was first written down by the ancient scribe.

45 The teachings of the Preacher which have formed the general subject of this instruction then, were not endorsements of passivity, neglect or personal responsibilities, relegation to others of duties one should personally assume, laziness, slothfulness or irresponsibility. They embodied an ideal of practical activity and the definite accomplishment of a mighty purpose that was far above the commonplace ideals of his day or of any subsequent day. We are just beginning to understand them just as we are only beginning to fully understand many of the mystical teachings of the Great Preacher. His own life was not one of irresponsibility or thoughtlessness by any manner of means. It was carefully planned, to make each year of his short ministry count for the utmost value. What Christ did in three short years ought to make some of us ashamed of what we fail to accomplish in many years of life carelessly frittered away on inconsequentials.

46 If we have failed to store up treasure of the right sort in our individual heaven, it is not too late to begin. We can start at once. But if we really desire this great treasure we must seek it with our whole heart, otherwise we shall make no observable advance. It is not to be had by merely wishing for it nor by soulful and soulful spiritual platitudes. It must be accumulated by constructive acts that will register distinct advances in our lives. If we seek wisdom, the Great Teacher stands ready to instruct and the great boon of mortal life is ours to provide the material plane on which it must be gained. Life is a wonderful thing. Truly it is more than meat or raiment, it is priceless OPPORTUNITY. Let us use it while it is ours in this present expression and cull from it that wisdom it enshrines. It is only thru the wisdom that we develop that we shall be able to understand what is meant by "eternal life" and to enter into the full joy that such understanding can bring.