

## SECTION SEVEN

### OUR DUTY

“Fear [reverence] God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccles. 12:13). “But what is thy duty? The demand of the hour” (Goethe).

5

“Prove to me only that the least  
Command of God’s is God’s indeed,  
And what injunction shall I need  
To pay obedience?” (*Browning*).

We have to recognise our duty at the present time. As has been said, 10  
“The continual sharpening of the knife is tiresome, if, after all, we have  
nothing to cut with it.” “It is our duty to seek success—the success of  
the other man” (W. H. Parmenter). We have to “abound in Love and  
Truth” and to heal sin and sickness. We have to practise diligently and  
lovingly Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, which now, with our new know- 15  
ledge, we find can be lived instead of only pondered over. Jesus pointed  
out that there were only two commandments—to love God, and love our  
neighbour. The law of Life demands the fulfilment of these. Obedience  
to them is essential, and the only thing that can give us present and per-  
manent happiness is loyalty to God, and its result, which is the helping 20  
of our fellow-man. To do this, we have to get rid of the results of our  
falsely educated habit of wrong thinking, and to learn how to think rightly.  
“He who would have full power must strive to get power over his own  
mind” (*Boethius*, King Alfred). This is the only way in which we can  
relieve others from their present troubles, and also from the waves of 25  
trouble that prophets and readers of thought have continually foretold as  
inevitably coming in the latter days. These troubles are beginning, and by  
learning how to think rightly we can protect a certain number of those we  
love, that number depending upon our knowledge of truth, and the life that  
we lead. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth . . . and for 30  
their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the  
truth” (John 17:17, 19). “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:20, 26).  
We have huge tasks before us. Let us fit ourselves so as both to ward off and  
destroy the unseen foe, which must be recognised, and destroyed as soon  
as recognised. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since 35  
the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt.  
24:21). Remember that such a passage refers to different successive  
material dream pictures, and consequently refers, not only to the flight of  
the descendants of Benjamin from Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but also to the  
latter days, which are now upon us, in which like incidents occur in new 40  
dress and are even now being recognised as happening in our midst by  
those who have learned how to discern the signs of the times.

**Man's Dominion.**—“*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*” (I John 3:8). “*On the first page of the Bible is the declaration that God gave man dominion over all the earth. If this is true, we ought to have dominion over our body, our business, our household, our affairs, our environments, our circumstances, our condition*” (Edward Kimball).

Fortunately we have absolute dominion over all evil, over every sense of want, moral, mental, and physical. We have to acquaint ourselves with the nature of the false claims of error, and, with spiritual alertness, to lay the axe at the root of all evil. Recognise the everlasting grandeur and immortality of the power of this God-given authority. “Live greatly, so shalt thou acquire unknown capacities of joy” (Coventry Patmore). Life has now to be more than a sense of existence; it must be “a sense of might and ability to subdue material conditions”<sup>1</sup> of every kind. “Wait patiently on illimitable Love, the lord and giver of Life. *Reflect this Life*, and with it cometh the full power of being.”<sup>2</sup> Again and again, right throughout the Bible, we are told of this sovereign power. “And God said, . . . let them have dominion . . . over all the earth” (Gen. 1:26). “The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning” (Ps. 49:14). Now the morning is breaking as the new light is spreading all over the world. “Dominion . . . shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High” (Dan. 7:27). How is it that all have not this dominion? We all have power to overcome and we shall overcome every so-called law of matter. Nothing can dispossess you of your power to think and therefore act rightly, for you are the son of God. This is “the gift of the grace of God” (Eph. 3:7). “For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (I Cor. 4:20). “The seeds of God-like power are in us still” (Matthew Arnold). “The power of the Divine Image within man gave him immediate command of Nature” (Plato). “Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control. These three alone lead life to sovereign power” (Tennyson). The only fatal mistake is the mistake of giving in.

We must obey Christ's loving demand, “Be ye perfect.” If this demand was valid when he spoke it, it is as valid to-day, and therefore possible to fulfil. We gain this dominion by knowing, feeling, and proving that Love, God, alone governs man. Might and majesty attend every advancing stage of this understanding. “Great, not like Cæsar, stained with blood, but only great as I am good.” Exercise this dominion and destroy sin, sickness, and suffering all around you, “For it is God which worketh in you” (Phil. 2:13). The exercise of this dominion is only a call to higher duties, not a release from cares and responsibilities. If you can maintain this dominion, nothing can cause you to sin or suffer. “You have simply to preserve a scientific, positive sense of unity with your divine source, and daily demonstrate this (Mary Baker Eddy). “But if thou dost receive nothing into thy desire, then thou art free from all things, and rulest over all things at once, as a prince of God. For thou hast received nothing from thine own, and art nothing to all things; and all things are as nothing to thee” (Jacob Boehme).

<sup>1</sup> *Unity of Good*, p. 42 (Mary Baker Eddy).

<sup>2</sup> *Pulpit and Press*, p. 4 (Mary Baker Eddy).

**Humility.**—“*What doth the Lord require of thee, but . . . to walk humbly with thy God?*” (Micah 6:8).

We find that “humility is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no troubles. It is never to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore. To wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret, and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble.” The material man can do nothing, and we may well say with Robert Browning :—

“ . . . Looking within and around me, I ever renew,  
With that stoop of the soul, which in bending, upraises it too,  
The submission of man’s nothing-perfect, to God’s all-complete,  
As by each new obeisance of spirit, I climb to his feet.”

Humility of this description is the laying down of a sham power, and the taking up of omnipotence; it is true genius. “To think first of others is the secret of gentleness” (Elizabeth Gibson). The spiritual man never thinks of himself. He thinks only of God and God’s ideas. “We desire now to lose the thinking of ourselves in thinking for others. . . . There is the Ideal! We are to be saviours of men, lovers of men, inspirers of men in self-forgetfulness” (Stopford Brooke).

**Glorify God.**—“*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 5:16).

We have to keep these “embodiments,” that we have hitherto called “ourselves,” free from sin, sickness, worries, and troubles, and make them glorify God, so that people will think, “How unselfish and thoughtful for others they are, how well and happy they always are, how quickly difficulties disappear; what is the reason for it all?” And when they hear to what it is due, they say, “That is what we want; we must endeavour to understand it!” In this way evil is made to glorify God. “The wrath of man shall praise thee” (Ps. 76:10). “Unto us a child is born: . . . his name shall be called Wonderful” (Isa. 9:6). “Let yourself and not your words preach for you” (Armiel), and yet all desires must disappear, “desire for personal gain, personal loves, personal attainments, and, last and subtlest of all, desire for personal perfection, for the personal self must be lost in the one self, that is, the self of all that lives” (Annie Besant). This does not mean that man finding himself loses his individuality. Each scintillates with infinite variety.

**Progress Necessary.**—“*The world is advancing, advance with it*” 40 (Mazzini).

When we learn to think rightly, that is, scientifically, we must not be satisfied with being what in the olden days we called good, otherwise we become self-righteous, and cover the rotten foundations with a coat of plaster. “They must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth” (J. R. Lowell). “He who ceases to become better, ceases to become good” (Oliver Cromwell). God affords us fresh opportunities as we use

those we have had. We must continually go up higher. As we understand that we are spiritual beings here, so do we learn our capabilities for good, and find that still greater sacrifices, not of joys, but of self-consciousness and sloth, are necessary. This is the pathway to the true glory of immortality. Our ability to do so-called miracles depends on how we are advancing, not upon how good we are. "The great man is he who knows that the spiritual will conquer" (Emerson). It must conquer and destroy all evil.

10 "So with every error conquered draw nearer to thy peace,  
And in Life's great song triumphant hear the discords falter—cease"  
(*Violet M. Firth*).

Be Selfless.—"The truth is that the cause of all sins in every person and every instance is excessive self-love" (Plato). "We must get rid of all thought of self before we can gain peace or happiness" (Emerson). "Success and happiness are only to be had in giving up our own will" (General Gordon).<sup>1</sup>

We have to learn to do right, merely because it is right, without the slightest regard for results. This doing right because it is right is called by Buddhists "Parikamma." We then grow to love to do right because we love good. This is the love of God, and the results to mankind of this love are in proportion to the understanding of what God is. Let all human desires merge into the desire for others' good. Then shall we understand the words of Job: "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26). "All good thinkers, so far as they are good, are characterised by indifference to results" (James Hinton). "Duty never yet did want his meed" (Shakespeare).

This, however, is not sufficient. "Put off thine own will, and there will be no more hell" (*Theologia Germanica*). "Desire is personal and therefore selfish" (Annie Besant). We have to lose self in love, to become absolutely selfless, having no will of our own (called in Buddhism "Virāga"), so that we allow the action of God to cause us always to do what is right. Looking away from self, the kingdom of God within, always present, will bear us upward, heavenward, until we find within it home, the City of Zion, Love itself. "There is but one virtue—to forget oneself as a person: one vice, to remember oneself" (Fichte). We know more now, namely, that the thing to be forgotten is the seeming material world and material man. The thing to be remembered is the real spiritual world and the real spiritual man. Then the action of God is seen. Lao-Tze, the great Chinese philosopher, who, like his contemporary, Gautama Buddha, must have been

<sup>1</sup> The Hindu and Buddhist scriptures are full of the necessity for renunciation of all personal desires. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* we read: "He whose Buddhi is everywhere unattached, the self subdued, dead to desires, he goeth by renunciation to the supreme perfection of freedom from Karma" (Discourse XVIII, 49). In the *Udānavarga* we read: "The steadfast, who care not for the happiness of desires, cast them off, and do soon depart [to Nirvana]." The *Dhammapada* says: "I have conquered all, I know all, . . . I left all, and through the destruction of thirst I am free." When Gautama attains Buddhahood, it says: "The mind, approaching the Eternal, has attained to the extinction of all desires." At the same time, as Annie Besant points out in *Reincarnation* "action is not to be stopped because the disciple no longer seeks the fruit of action as reward. 'Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.' (*Voice of the Silence*)."

individually very close indeed to the truth, said: "The pure men of old acted as they were moved, without calculation, not seeking to secure results. They laid no plans. Therefore, failing, they had no cause for regret; succeeding, no cause for congratulation."

He also said: "He acts by non-action, and by this he governs all," and again: "By non-action there is nothing that may not be done. One might undertake the government of the world without ever taking any trouble—and as for all those who take trouble, they are not competent to the government of the world." (It will be found that the word "trouble" means "material steps.") Lao-Tze knew well that right mental action (the realisation of God), was the only action of any value to man, and that the fewer the material steps, and the greater the reliance on the Principle of good, the better the results. In *Tao Têh* he writes: "Therefore the wise man knows without travelling, names things without seeing them, and accomplishes everything without action."

"Meekness, selflessness, and love are the paths of His testimony, and the footsteps of His flock" (Mary Baker Eddy). "Closeness to Christ necessitates separation from self" (A. R. Wells). "Love of God's will . . . is a higher degree of love, inasmuch as it requires us to renounce our own will" (St. Francis of Sales). Plato insisted that the true art of living is an act of dying to mere sense, in order more fully to exist in intimate union with goodness and beauty (see also I Cor. 15:31 and Phil. 1:21). He further insisted that the proper aim of man is not pleasure, but truth, beauty, and right, which are to be sought for their own worth. "It hath been said: 'The more of self and me, the more of sin and wickedness.' So likewise it hath been said: 'The more the self, the I, the me, the mine, that is, self-seeking and selfishness, abate in a man, the more doth God's I, that is, God Himself, increase in him'" (*Theologia Germanica*). We must exterminate self and thus find God's man, made in His image and likeness. "He who gains a victory over other men is strong, but he who gains a victory over himself is all-powerful" (Lao-Tze). "You can have neither a greater nor a less dominion than that over yourself" (Leonardo da Vinci). "Cast away personality, sacrifice it; what is left is the essence of life—Love" (Tolstoy).

**Pride.**—"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (Ps. 10:4).

"Pride is certainly the most naked form of sin, for pride is self-deification. It may be madness of disease, it may be rebellion, but inasmuch as it claims to be a law to itself, it is the very principle of sin come to self-consciousness. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas both say that pride is the beginning of sin, though not its root. We might equally well say that it is the end of sin, its completed development in self-chosen independence of God"<sup>1</sup> (W. R. Inge).

"Search thine own heart, what paineth thee  
In others, in thyself may be;  
All dust is frail, all flesh is weak;  
Be thou the true man thou dost seek" (*Whittier*).

<sup>1</sup> "The Paddock Lectures" for 1906.

**Criticism.**—“*Love is kind and suffers long; Love is meek and thinks no wrong*” (Bishop Wordsworth).

Impersonal criticism brings out facts, with the object of comparing them with prior knowledge, and so elucidating truth and helping the world.  
 5 True criticism is open-minded and constructive; false criticism is prejudiced and destructive. The highest criticism is scientific judgment. This separates not evil persons, but evil thoughts from the good, separating them in order to destroy them. In this way the false conclusions are reduced, and so the only support of evil is weakened and its final destruction in  
 10 every form hastened.<sup>1</sup>

Never under any circumstances indulge in the false luxury of personal criticism, the antithesis of love. Love “beareth all things, believeth all things” (I Cor. 13:7). “Hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye” (Matt. 7:5). If you thoroughly cast the beam out of your own  
 15 eye, or consciousness, there will be nothing to criticise, as the wrong thought that you are conscious of will be destroyed, and the victims freed. “For the accuser of our brethren is cast down. . . . Therefore rejoice” (Rev. 12:10, 12).

“Scepticism is deliberate, distrustful of appearances, grave, and candid.  
 20 Incredulity needs no thought, but is peremptory and scornful, and, not being reasonable, it cannot be reasoned with. The one is a high strong mental virtue . . . the other is a sign of mental debility”<sup>2</sup> (W. H. Thompson).

A man as a rule criticises in people the fault from which he himself  
 25 suffers most. Recognise yourself as the chosen instrument of God, His dear son, and look upon all men as His and your dearly beloved. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 19:19). Not only avoid all forms of personal criticism, but all forms of wrong thinking, or indeed any thinking of others, except for the purpose of helping them. “The wise  
 30 man knows no distinctions; he beholds all men as things made for holy uses” (Lao-Tze).

**Talking of Others.**—“*Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour*” (Zech. 8:17). “*Let every man sweep the snow before his own door, and not trouble himself about the frost on his neighbour's tiles*”  
 35 (Chinese).

Talking of others is one of the most insidious forms of evil. Few are altogether free from this dangerous habit. Let others be sacred to you. We should only talk of others in order to help them, and even then we should be very, very certain of our ground. With your mind stayed on Truth,  
 40 aflame with divine Love, this holy region can be approached. “Unselfish thoughts are the very portals of Heaven, and to dwell day by day in thoughts of peace toward every creature will bring abounding peace to their possessor” (James Allen). “Not only speak charitably, but feel so” (Elizabeth Fry).

45 <sup>1</sup> “Christian Science is the higher criticism because it criticizes evil, disease, and death—all that is unlike God, good—on a Scriptural basis, and approves or disapproves according to the word of God” (*Miscellany*, p. 240, Mary Baker Eddy).

<sup>2</sup> *As to Ourselves*.

When, in your hearing, a fellow human being ventures upon this dangerous ground of voicing evil of another, then hasten firmly, even if silyerly, to deny any reality to evil. Consistently reverse every material statement, and translate every false picture, however bad, back into its true meaning, and so gain its original spiritual truth. "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38). "Charity suffereth long, and is kind" (I Cor. 13:4). "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge" (Shakespeare). "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Love must be enthroned in consciousness. Love God with an intense love, and love your neighbour far more than yourself. Proof, not profession, is essential. Practical love is the divine way to heaven. "Shall we ever all learn this? . . . When we do the wide world will indeed be a beautiful place" (Edgar Daplyn). Let us hasten to learn and practise this Godlike quality.

**Friends.**—*"Blessed is the man who has the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of one's self, and seeing and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another man"* (Thomas Hughes).

"A faithful friend is a strong defence: and he that hath found such an one hath found a treasure." A true friend is one who, remembering to deny all apparent error, never forgets that his friend is really perfect, being the spiritual image and likeness of God, and in heaven. The greatest advantage of a friend is to have someone to love, someone to help. One mistake that I made as a young man was never to allow anyone to help me without doing an equal amount for him in return. Another mistake was thinking that to live my thanks without verbally stating them was sufficient. All men should be our friends, our loved ones. Then comes true happiness, perpetual happiness. All are then lovers, united in the enduring bonds of the true spiritual friendship, which constitutes the basis of all happiness. "Fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell" (William Morris). As Bacon says, friendship doubles our joys and halves our sorrows. To a true friend we can be ourselves and tell everything. Then we know that there is nothing that can make him think worse of us. The definition of a friend by Pythagoras was "Another I." "He's true to God who's true to man" (J. R. Lowell).

It is wise never to rely absolutely upon human so-called friendship, which is material. Rely solely upon God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isa. 26:3). A friend always wants to help you, but sometimes his idea of help is different from yours. Again, mortals are subject to fits of aberration until they know how to think rightly and carry right thinking into practice, and will do things that you would have thought impossible. Some of those who I know desired to help me, have had what have been practically fits of insanity, in which they have incriminated themselves, with no other apparent object than that of prejudicing me. "Judge before friendship, then confide till death." Remember that should a friend turn upon you it is not his fault, but his misfortune. It is your business then to protect him by thinking rightly yourself. Do

not think of him. Turn to your one and only true friend—God, and the trouble will then have been of use. The worst of all friends is the flatterer. It has been truly said, “flattery is a disease of friendship.”

**Be Unselfish.**—“*By being the most unselfish he is the most secure*”  
5 (Lao-Tze).

The Stoics used to say that a selfish man is a cancer in the universe, and Philo finds the root of sin in selfishness. The first step downwards of the prodigal son was: “Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me” (Luke 15:12). As Bacon said, like bees we kill ourselves in stinging  
10 others.

Selfishness comes from thinking that you want something and that you may lose what you have. Such thoughts breed unhappiness. “So long as you persist in selfishly seeking for your own personal happiness, so long will happiness elude you, and you will be sowing the seeds of wretched-  
15 ness. In so far as you succeed in losing yourself in the service of others, in that measure will happiness come to you, and you will reap a harvest of bliss” (James Allen in *From Poverty to Power*).

Unselfishness in the old mistaken methods of so-called living, as a rule, meant self-sacrifice, suffering, and giving way to others. Now we find that  
20 unselfishness is happiness, joy, continuing bliss, everything that is good. Further, viewed in the light of the knowledge of truth, and therefore understood scientifically, it is an unseen power, lifting a man out of a very prison to put him upon a throne. Jesus expressed this in the misunderstood saying: “He that loseth his life . . . shall find it” (Matt.  
25 10:39). In other words, in proportion as the material self is lost sight of, forgotten, dissociated from man’s real self, so does he gain power over that material self and all its seeming troubles. Thus he wields that spiritual government which alone gives him, when fully apprehended, dominion over all matter.

30 We have to lead a life of true unselfishness, always mentally working in the way already pointed out, so as to help each one with whom we come in contact. “One can create a heaven for many lives” (Elizabeth Gibson). We must not do this by thinking of them, of the material individual. This is wrong and absolutely hypnotic. Never, if you can help it, let your  
35 thought rest on the material concept of those you love. Be “willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8). Turn in thought at once to God and realise Him and the true spiritual consciousness and you cannot fail to help, and are less likely to be separated from those you love on earth, in exact proportion to the  
40 depth of your realisation of man’s unity with God, Spirit, in heaven.<sup>1</sup> “Sin is selfishness; Godliness is unselfishness” (Chevalier). “Where the love of self is banished, there dwelleth the love of God” (Jacob Boehme). “Pity is the touch of God in human hearts” (W. O. Smith, D.D., LL.D.).

<sup>1</sup> See I John 3, verse 17, and 4, verse 12.