

Subject: The Motive Power of Vision.

Scripture: Exodus 3¹⁻², Revelation 21¹⁻⁷.

Text: Revelation 21¹: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."

Last Sunday I tried to lay emphasis upon the plain every day duty of having a job, i.e. of doing something for some thing. I tried to bring out the manliness and the volubility of such work. But at best there was an atmosphere of something lacking in that conception. It is no doubt that many asked themselves, "Why?" Why all this work? I can see that I must work, but what is there of permanent value to inspire us and lead us

through the hardship? We
 saw the apparent necessity of doing
 over every day doing, and doing
 it well, but still there lurked
 in our minds that ever present
 "why."

So = why I want to suggest what
 seems to me to be the supplement:
 any idea that makes our con-
 ception of work more complete
 and rational.

We hear so much in these days about doing the things that lie nearest at hand; of looking out for the present and letting the future take care of itself that one wonders sometimes if we have not adopted as our motto of life those attractive lines of Thoreau / Whittier. "Take the work, and let the credit go; / nor heed the roar of a distant drum."

We have revolted very strongly from that old conception that this world is a place of barren, sin and wickedness, that life here is at best but an evil, to be endured rather than to be cured. The old conception that it is our duty to turn away from the world, to keep our lives pure and unspotted from its evil

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influences, to turn our backs
upon its joys and pleasures, in order
that we may enjoy a greater pleasure
a fuller life in the here after, that
old conception I say is no longer
tenable. We force cost it aside
as irrational in light of the
plain facts of life.

We begin to see that this world
with all its wickedness, sin
and suffering is not wholly
bad, such that whether or no
we must live here. So we
are learning that this world
is pretty much the kind of a
place we are wishing to
wake it. If it is a world
of sin and strife, it is so
because we wake it so.
If it is a world free and

acceptable unto God, it is because we make it so.

More and more our efforts are being turned in the direction of working this present world that we live ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ a flow of purity and nobility. We are placing great emphasis upon the idea of the Kingdom of God upon earth. Our efforts are directed to the duties involved in working life here finer, and more noble. We are very largely engaged in efforts to relieve the degrading conditions of the poor, to educate the ignorant, to make our social and political institutions better. We are learning that the good life is lived not by withdrawing from the world, but by entering

into its manifold interests,
and making it better.

But in casting aside the old
conception, and turning to the
new is there not a grave danger
of losing sight of and forgetting
a great truth that that lies
at the bottom of the old point
of view? Under the inspiration
of that old conception, men of
history have been able to
endure great hardships, to
survive great sorrows and
afflictions, yes. to meet and
welcome with terrible death
with out fear. For centuries
it has been the motive
power for heroic living
and heroic dying. In
casting aside the old, may

there not be a danger of casting with it some of the good wheat?

While we are confining ourselves to the duties near at hand; while our problems of education, reform and social justice are demanding our attention, there is one factor that we may easily overlook. Does not the motive power, the inspiration for accomplishing all these tasks come from a vision of better conditions of peace and living of a rich and fuller life in the far away future? Is there not a danger that, as we emphasize the performance of daily duties, we shall lose sight of the vision that is the source of all our power for doing. In fixing our eyes upon the ground at our feet, we

forget the beautiful landscape which stretches out upon all sides. It is only by looking up from time to time that we can understand the extent and greatness of our work. These momentary glimpses of the future, this vision of a new heaven and a new earth, are the sources of the great motive forces of all activities. We, who have a hard task to perform to-day look forward to see the goal towards which we are working, and that vision carries ^{us} through the hard commonplace duty, because we can see that the performance of the duty is ~~but~~ ^{an} step towards the realization of the ideal.

The influence of such a power upon the great figures of History stands out in so pronounced a manner that I hardly need refer to them. Perhaps even now these stand clearly before your mind a picture of the life of Moses, the great law giver. What a beautiful story of the influence of a vision his life presents. The thoughts of Moses in the enjoyment of his own freedom, turned constantly to his people Israel suffering under the burden and degradation of Egyptian bondage. We can almost see the workings of his mind as he brooded over their sufferings and sorrows. Out of the chaos

of such gloomy depressing thoughts these suddenly awakes the great vision of the people of Israel living in freedom and honor. Regardless of the stupor of his task, Moses, dominated by his new vision undertakes to free his people. With what results you know. Through hardships and difficulties great enough to discourage a nation, he follows the command of a vision, frees his people, and leads them towards the Promised Land. Moses had seen a new heaven and a new earth, and in that far away promised

Lord, slowly day by day the orbit heaven
and the first earth were passing
away; slowly day by day the Seruantes
were being emancipated from
Slavery.

Great as was the vision of
Woe, Jesus of Nazareth had
a greater one. Jesus, working at
his carpenter's trade, could not
keep his mind from dwelling
upon the conditions of masses,
and their lives. Slowly, out of
his thoughts and his experiences
there evolved a great vision.
Jesus had a great spiritual
insight into the relations of God
and man. He saw the dawning
of a new Kingdom of God, not
temporal, but eternal; not material
but spiritual, a Kingdom of justice

mercy and love, a kingdom of the fatherliness of God and the brotherliness of man. It was a great vision, and it took possession of Jesus' life, and controlled his every action. He had seen a deeper grander meaning in life, and the significance of that insight so permeated his life, that sacrifice for its realization, even the sacrifice of death, came not merely as a duty, but as a privilege. Jesus lived his life, not apart from the world but in the world, alive to all the interests of life, and enjoying all the richness and fullness that comes of a life of service and purity, but even before

him was that vision of a deeper and nobler conception of life. It was this vision, that inspired him to his noble holy life. To the realization he gave his whole life, does he heal the sick, his vision leads him; does he make the blind to see, his vision is before him; does he overturn the tables of the money changers in the temple, it is the vision that gives him the courage and the power. "Not my will, but thine be done" was Jesus in the crisis of his life. Jesus did the common every day things that men and women of his time were doing, but he lived within the influence of the great vision which gave him the strength and courage of the noblest life ever lived.

It is the same story over and over again. Generation after generation of human life has left its imprint upon history through the lives of its great men, who were dominated by a vision. The ancients paid great honor to their seers and prophets, and justly so, for their prophets revealed to them the visions which dominated and affected the motive force of the period. The great leaders of the past have been men of great visions, and progress has been possible, because the people have come to see which their leaders saw, and put themselves under the influence of them.

The same thing holds true to day, the men who are doing the great things in modern history, the men who are doing the things that will be remembered and revered, are the men who are dominated by the influence of a great vision.

What, for example, must be the vision which inspires Booker Washington to his almost superhuman labor? Are not his vision and task as great and as over-shadowing as the vision and task of Woe. Here are the millions of negroes in the death suffering in the bondage of ignorance and infidelity. The horror and degradation, the almost utter hopelessness of their condition for improved itself upon the

mind of all our people. Yet out of their very midst arises a prophet who understands their needs. Looking far into the future, this modern prophet sees a vision of his people living a life of self support, and self respect. Enthused and encouraged by this vision of a new heaven and a new earth, he begins his stupendous task. In less than one generation of men, we see a great beginning which assures the success of his plans. Booker Washington lead by this vision, backed by scores of brave supporters is carrying forward a movement, which bids fair to

be the most significant reform of the age. It is the woful force of a great vision that is leading them through the most discouraging and disheartening obstacles towards a certain success.

Mr. Jacob Riis, a reformer of another type, is doing a work of far-reaching influence. His knowledge of the conditions of the poor life among the poor in N. Y. enabled him to see the sharp contrast between the lives of the "other half," and the lives of luxury and extravagance. Out of his thoughts there grew a vision of a new heaven, and a new earth, in which greater comfort, justice, ~~luxury~~ ^{and} decency should prevail. Dominated by this vision he begins a reform. Slowly and

surely out of the filth and degradation of Mulberry Bend there emerges a condition of more honest living, of higher morality, and better citizenship. The old conditions have faded away under the persistent and forceful leadership of a great vision.

Such visions are dominating the lives of all our great men of today. The motive force of all activity of all noble life comes from having a great vision, to which in moments of discouragement, and moments of doubt we turn for inspiration and guidance. We now perfectly well, that such a vision does not lessen the clarity of

daily life, it rather increases them. But with our minds fixed upon a great vision, with the picture of a new heaven and a new earth before us, will not the obstacles and the difficulties of daily life seem less dangerous and discouraging. Will not the first heaven and the first earth fall away more rapidly?

Such visions belong to you and to us. We, too, look into the future to see a new heaven and a new earth, we, too, dominated by our vision. we transform our lives from inactivity and dissatisfaction into lives of glorious work and achievement.

As we sit in a quiet evening

thinking of some noble life, and
 dreaming dreams of the kind
 of noble men and women that
 we should like to become, are we
 not aroused to the determination
 of a greater activity and
 service. How often, when such
 a dry dream^{is} fresh in our mind
 we go to rest determined
 to do something worth while
 to-morrow. Yet when to-morrow
 comes, and our vision is
 thrust into the back ground
 by immediate demands,
 our good determinations
 are pushed aside with it,
 and the dry forces in the
 soul decaying way that other
 days have found. Each days
 work would be ~~big~~ noble

were attractive, each burden
 would be made more light,
 each sorrow would seem less
 bitter, if we but allowed that
 vision of our true a greater
 control of our actions. Some-
 where in the secrets of each
 human soul, there is a vision
 of noble work or work-
 hood, some dream of an
 hour when one is alone
 with God, and sees for a moment
 deep down into mysteries of life.
 That dream is sacred, and belongs
 only to one self, but it should be
 the guiding power of every moment
 of our life. It is a vision of our
 true noble self, let us give
 ourselves up to it, it will guide
 us into noble service, purity and love.

But there are other miseries which belong to all of us in common. We face grave problems of social and political nature in every town and state of our country. Corruption, dishonesty, bock-management injustice surround us on all sides. At times it seems as if the sun of liberty and honesty would be entirely lost from sight in the fog of corruption and selfishness. But so much the more faces the burden upon us. We must look into the future, and get a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, of a people among whom honesty, justice and peace prevail, - a vision of

the Kingdom of God upon earth. Then let us give ourselves over to the leadership, and guidance of that vision. If we live in a town where things are going wrong, let us exert ourselves to new labor, to greater effort, until the things are righted. If we are in a church where the spirit of service is dormant, let us put our shoulder to the wheel, and work, work, work. We have but to surrender body and soul to our vision, and a new heaven, and a new earth will begin to appear.

But there is a deeper and a more inspiring vision open to us if we are but awake to it. Moses had a vision of a new social and political life for his people. His vision has been

realized, and he passed away.

But Jesus had a greater vision. With his great insight into human life, and the nature of God, and God's love for man = kind. Jesus had a vision of an eternal heaven, which would not pass away. He felt, as you and I feel, that the human soul is not created for a few days, and then to pass away.

That was the great vision of his life. Shall we not also hold to that great spiritual vision of Jesus? When we know how true to life were all of Jesus' visions, besides this one, when we remember how in other things which the ages have proved to be

time, that Jesus had a true and accurate conception of life, - still, we vote, I say, when we remember all this, held to this greatest of all visions, the vision of an eternal life. We accept his leadership in other things, but we do not accept it in this vision which transcends all our knowledge, and all our experience, but which meets a deep constant demand of our soul, which makes life seem real and complete. Here we know in fact but there we still know all. It is a vision that answers every inherent demand in man's nature, which fulfills our hearts desire, and makes life rational. In this great vision of an eternal life of love with God and man, we find the greatest motive power

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for a life of purity, justice
and love.

Revised.

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