

Keeping back a part of the price.

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Cheshire

This strange little tale connected with the history of the early christian church, is a delightfully human document. Apart from certain obvious exaggerations that are intended to add to the dramatic effect of the story this incident is so characteristic of a certain type of a person that one can almost see how this Annius looked as he came walking up to the apostles and laid his money at their feet. Indeed it seems worth our while to take time to recall this situation just for

the sake of understanding its full significance. As you will recall, after the tragic death of Jesus the apostles came together, fired by the enthusiasm of his life, and consecrated by the glory of his death, to continue the work that he had begun. In the spontaneous allegiance of their souls to the glorious vision of a new heaven and a new earth which under the guidance of the gentle Nazarene, had been opened up to ~~XX~~ them, they cast to the winds all other considerations and gave themselves body and soul, and all their possessions to the glorious and gloryfying task of teachi-

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ing the gospel, of disclosing to men the glory of life
and the coming of the kingdom. So completely and absolutely had this become the one aim and purpose of ~~th~~
their lives that they banished from their minds the ~~p~~
possibility of any other considerations. Even the goods
and the private wealth were given over, and held in ~~e~~
common for the common needs of their lives. This whole
souled enthusiasm was contagious. People flocked to ~~XX~~
them , and cast in their lot with the beginners, laying
their goods also at the feet of the apostles. Still
carrying un their minds the image of the noble person-

ality of the wise laborer who but a few days since had been speaking to them , still influenced by his glorious idealism, linked to him by the infinite charm of his vital interest in the soul of man, these people were living in the exhilarating atmosphere of a moral idealism. It was life, blood and purpose for them. By the strength of its penetrating light they, the simple common folk of the Palistinian towns, had become transformed into the image of the infinite and the eternal manhood and womanhood. You may question their judge-

ment, you may smile at their wild enthusiasm, but you cannot question their motive and the purpose. They were among those whose purpose, whose enthusiasm, whose lofty idealism has been and still is the saving grace of the world. They had hitched their wagon to a star. They had seen something that was more to be desired than gold and precious stones, they had caught a glimpse of the wisdom of the ages. This high moral purpose was like a scent a new-mown hay that is born to us on the wings of a sunset breeze after a long dead sultry

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July day. It was refreshing, invigorating, soul-stirring, - a breath from the infinite. The multitude felt the warmth thereof and rejoiced.

Now into the midst of this invigorating atmosphere of the spirit comes this man Ananias and Sapphira his wife. They, too had seen these these people cast their goods into the common pile, they had seen that something was going on. They did not ~~XXXX~~ understand, indeed they could not understand for they were not used to ideals and moral purposes and lofty

enthusiasms. They saw these eager , expectant people,
and they could account for their joyous expectancy on
no other grounds than that this community of goods was
some kind of a pool into which they had entered for ~~the~~
the purpose of getting corner on eternal happiness and
eternal wealth. If there was any such thing going on
, if there was anything to be gotten out of this thing
Aninias and Sapphira wanted to be in on the ground ~~I~~
floor. But they could not find out just what the mar-
ket price of this new venture was, so~~X~~ they found them-

selves between the devil and the deep sea. If there was anything to be gained they wanted it, but they were not quite sure, They did not have the faith to go the full length and invest all their property in this undertaking. If this new kingdom was really to come Annas and Sapphira wanted a comfortable place in it. But it should prove to be a failure and should collapse and they should be left out in the cold they wanted something to fall back on. So they did the safe and the sane thing. They sold their property. Half of it they

hid away, to be used in case this new venture failed.

The other half they laid at the feet of the apostles and thought that they had paid a sufficiently large price to enable them to enter this group of idealists.

They were of the type of many who like to become idealists and reformers if it seems likely that it is going to be a paying proposition. You can almost see the expression of their faces as they presented themselves to the apostles and piously laid their price of admission at the apostles feet. Of course the apostles saw

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immediately that Annanias and Sapphria were not the
right sort, and they two speculators were immediately
taken to task for it. The story tells us that they fell
down dead and were carried away and buried. The charge
made against them was that they had been guilty of ly-
ing to God. They had been too faced, they had posed as
reformers, they had expressed their wish to join this
group of whole souled idealists, but their purpose was
mean sordid selfish, even to the point of dishonor. For
their duplicity they died.

But let me state in other words the the grave

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offense of which they had been guilty. They had thought that they could purchase their entrance into this glorious world of idealism for a certain sum of money. That once in there they could derive all the benefits, reap all the possible rewards, and become a part of the ~~XX~~ new heaven and the new earth for the simple price of admission. They did not know that the contribution to this group that counted was not the contribution of goods and wealth, but the contribution of the joyous whole souled moral purpose, life for the joy of the

living. What these idealists had contributed to the common store in the way of things and wealth were incidental to them. The real price that they had paid for admission to this group was the clear vision of a moral purpose, a complete faith in its value, and a whole souled consecration to its realization.

What Annanias and Sapphira had contributed was a sum of money. They had no vision, they had a best but half a faith, and no consecration. They went into the thing for what they could get out of it. They were essentia-

lly selfish, self-seeking people, even to the point of ignominious conduct. The thing was a sort of an investment for them. They had no purpose, no ideal but that of some kind of gain.

On the one hand you have the type of person who in the presence of the ideal stops not to consider whether it will pay or not, whether it will bring credit upon him or not, but simply takes it if it appeals to him as truth, as his voice of God, and puts himself and all his at its service in joy and in consecrated

devotion. On the other hand you have the man who ⁻¹⁴⁻ is ~~is~~ honest if it happens to be the best policy, but who is bound to be round when the returns are coming in, who is willing to father any good cause if it will reflect credit upon him, ~~XXXXXX~~ or bring him some kind of return for his investment.

I have analysed this story at length because in it you have a good clear -cut illustration of a great principle of life. You cannot purchase at any price except the price of achievement any of the things

that are worth while. You cannot hold back one ⁻¹⁵⁻iota of
the glori-us whole soulded consecration demanded of X
the life that lives. Every bit that you hold back as
a selfish reservation for your own security is just so
much deadly poison that is destroying and eating away
the very heart of your existance. It makes little or
no differance what may be the particular thing into
which you may put yourself, if you make this selfish
reservation , if you do not give yourself body and soul
to the realization of the truth that you see, you have
already registered the moral and the spiritual death

of your being. This does not mean that you will not
be able to feel and to see and to hear and to taste.
Of course if you are living just for that kind of a
life of sensational pleasure, you can get it all
spiced to your taste, ~~but do not for one moment think~~
just as long as you have the money to pay for it. When
that is gone, your life is gone and you are left to die
alone in some lonely out of the way spot, where you will
not be an offense to the world that you have lived in/
But if you want to live, to get a glimpse of the eter-
and the infinite life, to feel the joyous glow of a

vital engrossing purpose, you must cast behind you all

conformity, and acquaint yourself at first hand with

Deity. That idealism of which Kipling speaks as a

hope for another world , should be a living reality

in our lives here and now every day that we live.

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the

Master shall blame,

And no one shall work for money and no one shall

work for fame,

But each for the joy of the working and each in his

separate star ,

shall draw the thing as he sees it for the God of

things as they are.

But add to this high individualism of Kiplings

of the common life of man which only that poet of the
divinity of the common life can give, and we have a s
suggestion of what life really should be and is , if
we but let it.

" One thought ~~XXXXXX~~ ever at the fore---
That in the Divine ship, the world, breasting time and
space,
All peoples of the globe ~~XXXXXX~~ together sail, sail the
same voyage, are bound to the same destination.

But let me make a little more specific just
what I wish to say. In the first place the things that
are worth while cannot be bought. Truth , life itself

every thing in life that distinguishes the life of man from the life of animal has been wrought from out of the soul of things by a hard and sometimes cruel labor. Do you wish to enter that world where Emerson lived , you cannot do it by buying a set of Emersons books. You must read, think, read, reconstruct, absorb, give-out with a lavish hand, feel the living image of his presence standing over you ,enveloping you with a halo of his mystic flights of thought and aspiration. You must achieve by experience the truth that he achieved/ Can you keep pace with him as he flits across the seas

and down the ages , catching up into his soul the ~~XPI~~

spirit of infinite truth, and putting into these lines

the whole doctrine of revelation and inspiration. ?

I

There is no great and small
To the Soul that maketh all;
And where it cometh all things are;
And it cometh everywhere.

II

I am Owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Caesars hand, and Platoes brain/
Of the Lord Christs heart, and Sheakspeare's Strain.

That may be acheived only as you give you whole soul
without any selfish reservations to the understanding
of the heart of humanity.

What, think you can purchase the insight into
the Lord Christ's heart by saying like a parrot the
fragments of speech that come downto us through the

ages , or by crying Lord, Lord, ? Know you not that to
purchase the cherished glimpse of the soul of the noble
Nazarene, you must walk with him the same via dolorosa
that he traveled , you must go with him alone into the
Garden of Gethsemens. ? You must feel the sorrow of
the world, you must feel the joy of life, you must give
body and soul for the life of those whith whom seil X
the voyage of life togeteher. I say these are the X
things that are worth while. They can only ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
be obtained by the acheivments of life. They are last-
ing , they will glow when the sun grows cold and mix

with Deity.

But there is one more illustration of what I am trying to say that I wish to speak of. Yet even here I cannot say ,I can only suggest. There are certain evident facts that point in the direction of a menace to the home life and the integrity of the family. I need not point out to you that in no small degree these grewsome tales are possible because there are people who think that love and the home life can be purchased , either for money or for someother kind of a price.

But here again we are dealing with the musteries of the soul, and as the anguish revealed by many incidents of common knowledge declare , the household god dwells & only where love lights and keeps burning the fire on hearth.

The secret of the great life is the great vision the complete faith, and the whooe souled consecration. The secret of that moral and spititual death, more horrible by a thousandx times is the selfish reservation, the disingenuous duplicity of Annanias and Sapph-

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hira . It is forever creating a hell of anguish more
terrible than even Dante could picture. But how a
breath of pure moral idealism quenches the fires,
and ministers to the souls that hunger and thirst aft-
er the truth and the life of the living God.

But in the back ground of all that I have been
saying has lurked the thought of the pressing need in
this life of ours of a lofty vision, of a complete ~~FA~~
faith, of a whole souled consecration that shall lift
us away from ourselves, and our things and our selfish

~~25~~ 25

ness and our petty reservations , and carry us by the
might of its compelling force away from all the hideous
disco dant noises of the day. Some thing lofty and g
grand that shall defy our very faith and challenge ev-
ery resource, and finally carry us by the sweep of its
omnipotence out into the great sea of the open and the
noble life. I love to live and to enjoy the little ~~XX~~
movements of the small circle in which we move , but I
I want to feel that the great body is moving with an
irresistable might towards some great beter and purer

life. I want to feel the pulse of new born desires ~~-24~~ 26
surging through my very being . Do you not long to be
a part of some great movement that shall cast behind
it all conformity , and push its way straight to some
far off goal, and drink deeply of the truth of the ~~XX~~
life of the human soul, that shall challenge its hero -
ism, and arouse that adventerous faith that burns beh
hind it all bridges and presses forward with the un-
doubting ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ardor of youth into the unknown fu-
ture. I find this same feeling in all that I read

25-25-27
It cannot be that I find it these simply because I

feel it myself. We are getting tired and sick of

feeding on these dry and close cropped fields of

Prosperity. Here and there some lone soul or some

small group are looking up to catch the glimpse of

new feilds. Now and a gain we hear the voice of the

idealist, now and a gain we hear the word of the prop-

het. By and by they will see the true and the command-

ing vision, and the complete faith will come, and the

whole souled consecration will follow. Then they will

~~28~~ 29

cast their all into the common pile and take their way

over the hills to a new resting place on the way to
the kingdom of God.

Already the voice of the idealist is being ~~KK~~
heard. You ~~KKK~~ who have long cherished to precious
wealth of a great moral purpose, restrain not your en-
thusiasm, let it glow to a white heat, and cast its
light abroad. You have a precious thing, that inde-
finable unsaleable ideal of yours. Give it with out ~~X~~
reservation/ and with it give yourself, and your all

to that great glorious adventure in which you see no ⁻²⁷⁻ ~~28~~ 29

~~profits~~ profits but the infinite joy of living and
working for the life of man. Be sure above all things
else that you do not make the mistake of thinking that
you can buy your way into this growing life of a new
dispensation, which, like a new growth upon the moun-
tain side, is putting forth its fresh and living bran-
ches above the decaying timber of a dead commercialism/
You must feel its pulse, hear its call, and respond
with all your soul. The multitudes are yet a waiting

Just as I was finishing this I chanced upon one
of Emerson's poems that as made for just those who
have some clean lure ideal that they have cherished
in the secret chambers of the soul, and have nurtured
that it might be ready for the fullness of time.

" Be of good cheer, brave spirit ; steadfastly
Serve that low whisper thou hast served; for know
God hath a select family of sons
Now scattered wide through earth, and each alone
Who are thy spiritual kindred, and each one
By constant service to that inward law,
Is weaving the sublime proportions
Of a true Monarch's soul. Beauty and strength,
In the riches of spotless memory,
The eloquence of ~~XXXXX~~ truth, the wisdom got
By searching of a clear and loving eye
That seeth as God seeth. These are their gifts,

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And Time, who keeps God's word, brings on the day
To seal the marriage of these minds with thine,
Thine everlasting lovers. Ye shall be ~~XXXXXXXX~~
The salt of all the elements, world of the world.

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Do you not feel that
even now you are being
waded to a great army of those
who have cherished ideals, and
are now being waded into
a mighty stream, that by the
power of its irresistible momentum
shall bring a new heaven & earth

Can you not feel within
your grasp the fower of
Cooper's hand, and Plato's brain
The Lord Christ's heart and
Shakespeare's strain,?