

The New World Movement—Service

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There is nothing new under the sun.

There is today a considerable turning of mankind towards ways and means of making life easier, better and more worth living. On every hand and in every direction there are springing up sections and societies whose chief obligation seems to be to look towards the light and reflect it. The output of more or less poetical injunctions to "Smile," "Grin" and "Get Going," and similar incentives to pleasant and rapid progress is perhaps only equalled by the volume of literature published urging upon mankind the necessity for doing something for the next man.

"Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you," is advice so old that it will stand being twisted around into new and more modern phraseology, but, old though it is, it is very young by comparison with the age of the very subject of our contemplation—Service.

I am influenced by the lives of two men, Charles Dickens and Sir Robert Baden-Powell. Both of these men possessed the same valuable characteristic, the power of concentrating the whole of their faculties upon the work they had in hand at the moment and doing it the best they knew how—Service.

Moreover, one of these men lived a life of Service and the other is still living it, because they have both been responsible, one indirectly and the other directly, for two movements which have had far reaching effect for Good, movements which have had for their object—Service, viz, The Dickens' Fellowship and the Boy Scouts. It is impossible to dispute that in ten years' time or thereabouts the training of the latter will exert a wonderful influence, not only upon the World's Peace, but upon the Existence of the Inhabitants of the Earth. Why? Because the key note of the Organization is—Service, and the Motto, "One Good Turn a Day." Just think what that would mean if all of us understood the meaning of those five simple words and obeyed their intention. To me it appears the most noble epitaph a man or woman can possibly have inscribed over their last resting place is "He (or she) lived a life of Service."

Yet this doctrine is somewhere about 100,000 years old, if it is true, as scientists tell us, that life began on this planet about that time, for without Service there can be no progress. Sufficient for our purpose, however, is to turn back to the days of Marcus Aurelius, for he told his contemporaries seventeen hundred years ago that a life of Service was the only real life, that he who did not serve had not lived and only those who have served and who understand the ever enduring pleasures of right thinking and right doing can appreciate the blessings which are as-

sociated with the Truth. Marcus Aurelius likens a man who does good or who lives a life of Service to a vine abundantly producing grapes, as follows:

"One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favour conferred. Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, but he is like a vine which has produced grapes, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit. As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has tracked the game, a bee when it has made the honey, so a man, when he has done a good act does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season.

"Does another do me wrong? Let him look to it. He has his own disposition, his own activity. I now have what the universal nature wills me to have; and I do what my nature now wills me to do.

"Art thou angry with him whose armpits stink? Art thou angry with him whose mouth smells foul? What good will this anger do *thee*? He has such a mouth, he has such armpits: it is necessary that such an emanation should come from such things; but the man has reason, it will be said, and he is able, if he takes pains, to discover where-in he offends; I wish thee well of thy discovery. Well then, and thou hast reason; by thy rational faculty stir up his rational faculty: show him his error, admonish him. For if he listens thou wilt cure him, and there is no need of anger."

Thus the endeavour put forth to lead a life of Service results in a better and brighter existence. There is no human being breathing the breath of life today who cannot understand, if he will, and who cannot do something, however small, towards the universal good. Service, as I see it, is not of necessity physical action. It may be a smile, a kindly thought, a pleasant word. Something with a core, a heart of truth. Right as against wrong, positive as against negative, truth as against falsehood, in act, in thought, in word and in motive.

Perpetual Sowing of Seed.

The man who is so fortunate as to grasp the real meaning of a Life of Service may be likened to a Sower of Seed which is always bearing fruit. Like attracts like and to him who does will gravitate those who do also. All we are responsible for in this world acts as a boomerang. Industry, Honesty, Punctuality, Idleness, Dishonesty, Carelessness, Trickery, Sharp Practice, Straightfor-

wardness, Affability, Trueculence, and, in short, every attribute of a human being recoils upon him for good or for evil according to the character of the impressions he lets loose upon the world.

Reputation built of Confidence and Trust is only purchasable by Deeds—Service. No money can buy a reputation, but the most insignificant creature hidden away in a dark and noisome slum may possess one for good or for evil, according to his works, for it is according to our works, not our talk, that we are known.

Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that, rolling from the face of humanity like a foul and ugly scroll, is the curtain of darkness, deceit and doubt which has hidden it for so many, many years. Gradually to the watching millions the light of Truth is forcing its desirable, beneficent way. Into the limbo of forgotten things is slowly, slowly, but so surely, sinking the ignorance and the depravity, the squalor and the dreadfulness of existence which for so long has stunted the growth and curtailed the advancement of human progress.

This fact cannot be disputed. Broader, brighter, saner, the Eliminating Sponge of Tolerance is wiping clean the Slate of Human Existence, obliterating disease, doubt, prejudice, malice and all the weapons Devil forged which make for the misery of the Universe.

You see it all around. Contrast today with twenty years ago only. Contrast it with what history teaches us of 300 or 400 years ago. Slow, perhaps, but it is progress—Progress due to Service.

You see it in the churches, in the theatres, in the streets, on every hand are its signs. Progress due to Service. Is life lived quicker now than heretofore? It is man who makes the pace, not Nature. You can't hurry Nature with impunity.

Is competition keener? Those who study Service are away beyond it or better able to meet it. Is this world to you a hard and trying habitation? Your share in the Universal Service should make it better.

All groups of workers are in the Service of Humanity. Scientists, Manufacturers, Farmers, even the inventor of dreadful war engines is contributing his share towards the fulfillment of the Destiny of Man by making war impossible. Possibly men are money makers just because of the Services they render. It seems that if a man make two blades of grass grow where one grew before he must, by the Inevitable Law of Compensation, benefit in another direction—usually by money-making.

Money-making is not Service. More often than not it is an accident which considerably injures the man who makes it. Does it avail a man anything, when dying, to be able to say, "Thank God I am leaving behind me a billion dollars?" Is not the probability that however he may apportion it, there will be greed and heart-burning, disturbances, and perhaps partings in anger between friends? How much easier can a man go forth to face his Maker and his Judge with the knowledge, never to be taken from him, that his life has been one of charity and love and usefulness and Service towards his fellow creatures. Many a man considers that, having made a will and left a few thousand dollars to charity, a halo of righteousness and a mantle of forgiveness immediately descends upon him. A man has only

lived when he has left some lasting good behind when his turn comes to sail the Unknown Sea.

A great British Publisher, Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, devoted a life of usefulness to what is known in England as the Fresh Air Fund. Every year funds were collected through his numerous publications for the purpose of sending slum children for a day or two weeks, according to circumstances, into the country. Hundreds of thousands of poor children, whose lives were narrowed to black, blank walls of brick, with gutters of filth and dirt in which to play, had days of never forgotten delight amidst the flowers and the grasses in the pure, sweet sunlit air of the country side.

Today, somewhere, I believe, on the Sunny Slopes of a foreign Southern Country, C. Arthur Pearson exists, practically blind. It seems like a preordained decree that, through the dark days of a closing life there should be ever present the consciousness of happiness given to thousands who otherwise would never have tasted it, the quiet and dispassionate contemplation of a life of Service—something done for Good, something which will live.

The Universal Power of Service.

History teems with the names of great leaders in causes lost and won, righteous and otherwise, but of what use are leaders who have no followers? Hence Service is open to all. The child in his school, the apprentice at his work, the clerk in the warehouse, the worker in the factory, the labourer in the field, the Master in his Counting House, the King upon his Throne. Indeed, our own King George is one of the World's finest examples of a life devoted to Service, equalled only, possibly, by Queen Mary, who sets an example of the ideal Wife and Mother making the Ideal Home worthy of contemplation and of emulation.

There is in the World today a Universal Cry which is being answered in a way that it has never been answered before. That cry has been so ably expressed by one of America's own Presidents, John Quincy Adams, that to reproduce it seems the right and natural thing to do. It is taken from his poem "The Wants of Man":

"I want a warm and faithful friend
To cheer the adverse hour,
Who ne'er to flatter will descend
Nor bend the knee to power;
A friend to chide me when I'm wrong,
My inmost soul to see,
And that my friendship prove as strong
For him as his for me."

Service to Man means Friendship. It is, beyond question, the best paying investment a human being can make. In happiness alone it more than pays for itself, and, as the years roll along the consciousness of kindly actions, thoughtful and tolerant consideration, the daily something worth while, the hand grip of sincerity, the stern repression of selfishness, the gladsome smile, the beaming eye, the uplifted genial face, the hall-marks of Truth, bring back to memory's consideration that feeling of sincere and lasting contentment that all the gold and precious stones ever dragged from the Earth could not purchase. Living the Truth, breathing positively and consistently, thinking, acting, talking positively, shunning the negative, scorning to crawl or cringe for favours offered, but preferring to stand square upon your feet as the Man that God made you, repressing the evil, elevating the good, living the clean, open life that

you were born to live—this is Service,—the Service of Example.

Diligent in Business, careful as to reputation, making your word your bond, openness, straight dealing, value for money, and a little over if possible, helping your neighbour, disbursing that which you know to be Good and True, obeying the laws and being a righteous and God fearing Citizen—this is Service, the Service of Living.

As the Universe is composed of atoms, so life as we understand it, is composed of details, some important, some seemingly trivial. But details discover the man. By little things we are known. Life is made of little things. The ability to take those little things and build them, shape them, arrange them, into one bright, desirable form, so that those who look may live, is—Service.

In all the literature of the World worth while the doctrine of Service is woven through as a golden thread in a carpet of wool. Service is common to all, as free, as desirable, as beneficial, as strengthening, as necessary and as easily obtainable as the air by which we live.

No Monopoly of Service.

There is no monopoly, no trust, no corner. It may be picked up anywhere at any time for the asking. It is anybody's property; it should be everybody's. It is yours NOW. It is a little nugget which you may pick from the roadside and slip into the knapsack of your conscience on your journey through life. It is a charm which can work you nothing but Good, through Truth. It is a talisman which will lift you over all the ruts and the steep places of your road, guide you safely on your journey and land you eventually in the seat of the just and the desired.

You can start *your* life of Service at this present moment. I care not where you are or what you are doing. You may even be sound asleep but the intensity of your sleep and its peacefulness will depend upon your actions in the hours that have past. You can raise a smile now if you try, you can feel within your real self a growing desire to do something worth while, something that will bring its own reward.

Down in your heart of hearts, my friend, there is the consciousness that perhaps sometimes you have been just a little careless of the feelings of others, just a little indifferent, just a little cross or short tempered. A kind word here, a smile there, a little friendly advice over the way, the word you might have spoken which would have landed that order for Smith, the grunt that might

have been a word, the dark glance that might have been a bright look.

Life is made of little things.

The ability to give Service is Universal. It is one of the most important planks of Rotary, and I believe that through Rotary it will eventually work its greatest good, because Service in Rotary is Voluntary, it is not taught for profit-making, it is not sold at so much per lesson, it is, if not Religion, as near Religion as a man will ever get, and it is a Religion that any man, no matter under what flag he may be born, can study and study and study, and practice and practice and practice, all the time for good, all the time for helpfulness, all the time for sympathy, all the time for TRUTH, for by the truth only can he live, all else is death.

I am not quite in love with the sentence "He profits most who serves best." One cannot make a bargain with God Almighty. Either you serve or you don't serve and serving for profit is only a matter of degree. It's commercial and it's sordid. While I believe, as I of necessity must, in doing the best I can to find the wherewithal to live, yet I believe that Service for the sake of Service makes a better man than Service for the sake of Profit. The return for Service might very well be permitted to look after itself, for every man in the course of time is rewarded according to his worth. Service for anticipated profit is barter, and should have no place in Rotary. As the Turks have it: "Do good and throw it into the Sea; if the Fish know it not, the Lord will."

To my mind it is the voluntary nature of Service in Rotary which is its strongest claim. The best and most conscientious Rotarians are those who give Service for the sake of Service. The givers of Service for Profit in Rotary drop out. Any Club Secretary will tell you that. The reason is because they are divided in their minds as to whether it will pay them best to attend to Rotary or to attend somewhere else where their Service may bring more profit, with the result that, like the Dog and the Shadow, they lose the substance.

To use the American phrase, Brother Rotarian, it's up to you. Get ready for the field instant. Marching orders have been received. Your Arms of Tolerance and Consideration are burnished brightly, the Ammunition of Kindly Thoughts and Kindly Deeds has been served out, your Knapsack is Full of the Sustaining Food of Bright Endeavour, you are attached to the Regiment of Rotary 10,000 strong and the Watchword is—Service.

March!

What a vision.

THE
YOUNGEST
ROTARIAN
IN THE WORLD.



SECRETARY
PENWARDEN'S
SIX-HOURS-OLD
SON.

JOHN THOMAS ROTARIAN PENWARDEN.