The Balance of Maturity

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 While some of us have an eye single to the attainment of eternal realities, we must also make provision for the necessities of temporal living. While the spirit is our goal, the flesh is a fact. Occasionally the necessities of living may fall into our hands by accident, but in general, we must intelligently work for them. The two major problems of life are: making a temporal living and the achievement of eternal survival. And even the problem of making a living requires religion for its ideal solution. These are both highly personal problems. True religion, in fact, does not function apart from the individual.

 The essentials of the temporal life are:

 1. Good physical health.

 2. Clear and clean thinking.

 3. Ability and skill.

 4. Wealth- the goods of life.

 5. Ability to withstand defeat.

 6. Culture -education and wisdom.

 Even the physical problems of bodily health and efficiency are best solved when they are viewed from the religious standpoint: our body and mind are the dwelling place of our gifts from God -the spirit of God becoming the spirit of man. Our mind thus becomes the mediator between material things and spiritual realities.

 It requires intelligence to secure one's share of the desirable things of life. It is wholly erroneous to suppose that faithfulness in doing one's daily work will insure the rewards of wealth. Barring the occasional and accidental acquirement of wealth, the material re wards of the temporal life are found to flow in certain well-organized channels, and only those who have access to these channels may expect to be well rewarded for their temporal efforts. Poverty must ever be the lot of all men who seek for wealth in isolated and individual channels. Wise planning, therefore, becomes the one thing essential to worldly prosperity. Success requires not only devotion to one's work but also that one should function as a part of some one of the channels of material wealth. If you are unwise, you can bestow a devoted life upon your generation without material reward; if you are an accidental beneficiary of the flow of wealth, you may roll in luxury even though you have done nothing worthwhile for your fellow beings.

 Ability is that which you inherit, while skill is what you acquire. Life is not real to one who cannot do some one thing well, expertly. Skill is one of the real sources of the satisfaction of living. Ability implies the gift of foresight, far-seeing vision. Be not deceived by the tempting rewards of dishonest achievement; be willing to toil for the later returns inherent in honest endeavor. The wise man is able to distinguish between means and ends; otherwise, sometimes overplanning\_ for the future defeats its own high purpose. As a pleasure seeker, you should aim always to be a producer as well as a consumer.

 Train your memory to hold in sacred trust the strength- giving and worth-while episodes of life, which you can recall at will for your pleasure and edification. Thus, build up for yourself and in yourself reserve galleries of beauty, goodness, and artistic grandeur. But the noblest of all memories are the treasured recollections of the great moments of a superb friendship. And all of these memory treasures radiate their most precious and exalting influences under the releasing touch of spiritual worship. But life will become a burden of existence unless you learn how to fail gracefully. There is an art in defeat which noble souls always, acquire; you must know how to lose, cheerfully; you must be fearless of disappointment. Never hesitate to admit failure. Make no attempt to hide failure under deceptive smiles and beaming optimism. It sounds well always to claim success, but the end results are appalling. Such a technique leads directly to the creations of a world of unreality and to the inevitable crash of ultimate disillusionment.

 Success may generate courage and promote confidence, but wisdom comes only from the experiences of adjustment to the results of one's failures. Men who prefer optimistic illusions to reality can never become wise. Only those who face facts and adjust them to ideals can achieve wisdom. Wisdom embraces both the fact and the ideal and therefore saves its devotees from both of those barren extremes of philosophy - the man whose idealism excludes facts and the materialist who is devoid of spiritual outlook. Those timid souls who can only keep up the struggle of life by the aid of continuous false illusions of success are doomed to suffer failure and experience defeat as they ultimately awaken from the dream world of their own imaginations

 And it is this business of facing failure and adjusting to defeat that the far-reaching vision of religion exerts its supreme influence. Failure is simply an educational episode - a cultural experiment in the acquirement of wisdom - in the experience of the God-seeking person who has embarked on the eternal adventure of the exploration of a universe. To such person’s defeat is but a new tool for the achievement of higher levels of universe reality.

 The career of a God-seeking person may prove to be a great success in the light of eternity, even though the whole temporal life enterprise may appear as an overwhelming failure, provided each life failure yielded the culture of wisdom and spirit achievement. Do not make the mistake of confusing knowledge, culture, and wisdom. They are related in life, but they represent vastly differing spirit values; wisdom (knowledge plus experience) ever dominates knowledge and always glorifies culture.