

MAN'S DUTIES

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The materialist and the determinist both deny the existence of moral responsibility. Any mechanistic scheme which gives no place to selfhood or intelligent volition is forced to the same conclusion. Ethical conduct has no meaning apart from the power to choose and act according to some standard of right, while "right" and "wrong" are also useless expressions unless there is also the power to choose between good and evil. Likewise, man's sense of "right" arises from his moral nature, and because of that inward feeling of moral compulsion he must needs fulfil that "right." Man, therefore, has duties to perform. They are inescapable if he is to qualify as a member of a social and spiritual society. "If a man doesn't do his duties, he isn't entitled to his rights." Duties fall into four classes:

I. Man's Duties to Himself:

The place to clean house is at home. In a sense, man's first duty is towards himself, for how can he hope to fulfil his obligations towards society, unless he himself has met the requirements which arise from his own personality? A man cannot hope for the respect of others, unless he respects himself. Such self-esteem need not be rank ego-centrism, but it must have enough of self-appraisal and self-edification in it to preserve his personality from a social lethargy which certainly would be a detriment to society as well as to himself. There is little benefit in a minimization of self, even for the interests of others. A thorough-going altruism is impossible, for if it were practised universally, no one would care for the development of his own body and soul. The person is responsible for the capacities he has, which include both the intellectual and the spiritual aspects of his nature. In the growing of a soul, the development of capacities should be "well-rounded," so to speak—that is, none should be over-emphasized at the expense of others, for man is responsible for all the talents he has, whether many or few. Jesus Christ taught this truth to His disciples. Man thus has a duty to himself, but it need not be considered as a burden. It may well be a channel of delight, and a means to the best in life. "The highest human good is the realization of all one's normal possibilities."

II. Man's Duties to His Neighbors:

The true neighbor is one who sees the plight of his fellow man and is willing to do something about it. It is not sufficient that a man possess a mere negative attitude towards those around him. Sometimes a careless passivity is more harmful to the social fabric, than is an occasional external act whereby his neighbor might suffer. Neighborliness must be a positive quality, and in the proper exercise of that most basic of ethical tenets abides the remedy for many of this world's ills. The neighbor is not only the man next door; but the person one meets anywhere. If men and women would practise good-will towards each other, and would give no place to animosity or resentment, then tumults and wars would cease. Good neighbors do not fight. Each respects the other's freedom, but neither takes a liberty which trespasses a right of the other. That man should deal rightly with his neighbor is the basis of any human society. Codes and laws would not need to be formulated if all men everywhere would obey the simple injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This command is second only to the

first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Man's second greatest duty, then, is towards his neighbor. He cannot scorn him. His attitude towards his neighbor will largely determine his relationship with God. It is wise, therefore, that a man respect his neighbor, and in all instances, so far as is possible to "do as he would be done by."

III. Man's Duties to the State:

This section might well have been included in the former, for where men respect each others' rights as individuals, no one would care to offend a whole community or state. But that is ideal, however. Men do not always behave, and because the rights of others are sometimes trampled under foot, the state must needs make and enforce laws whereby offending citizens can be reprimanded, and if necessary to be incarcerated where they cannot menace society. But man has certain positive duties towards his country's government, both local and national. A state is no better than the individuals which compose it, therefore, it becomes the individual to co-operate in the establishment and maintenance of the best possible governmental organization. The notion of the "state" is somewhat intangible, and many people, if asked, could not properly define it. There is, nevertheless, a feeling of unity, sometimes centered in a king, president, or as in the more modern method, in a self-appointed dictator. It is this feeling of "oneness" which must be upheld, and which the person should honor, respect, and so far as it is not in conflict with an enlightened conscience, subscribe to its program, and help maintain the status quo.

IV. Man's Duties to God:

Man's first and greatest duty is to God. We have already quoted Jesus' answer to the question, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" but we will repeat it: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." If duties toward God involves a satisfying of a set of legal exactments or a balancing of justice, man could never hope to repay God for all His good gifts and His marvellous mercies. But God does not ask to be repaid. All He wants is man's obedience, and the proper use of the talents with which he has been endowed. The complete practise of obedience alone cares for all the duties of man to God. If man lives and acts according to his knowledge of the will of God, he need not worry about the complexities of theology, nor all the ramifications of ethical doctrine. Obedience is basic in Christian conduct. It is the proper expression of the will towards moral requirements. Proper obedience includes in its sweep all that a man should do. Inward conformity to the will of God will regulate, but supersedes the external act. "To obey is better than sacrifice." It is man's duty to be right, then to live right. To exercise himself in the service of God and humanity; and to do all to the glory of God. Such, demands a spirit made free from the sin which keeps the self from obedience to divine precepts.

There are two good rules that ought to be written on every heart. Never believe anything bad about anybody unless you positively know it is true. Never tell even that unless you feel that it is absolutely necessary, and that God is listening while you tell it—Henry Van Dyke.

REVIVAL SUCCESS

Revival methods will vary with different times, places, and people; but the conditions, like those of life, growth, and fruitage, are always and everywhere the same. Pentecost is a graphic pen-picture of the meeting of these conditions and of the revival results which may follow.

1. They realized the imperative importance of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, to fit them for God's work.
2. They met to pray for this.
3. They claimed the fulfillment of the exceeding great and precious promises, which assure of His coming.
4. They were inflexibly determined to prevail, and to tarry until they did, were it ten days or longer.
5. They met the fixed conditions of self-abandonment and trust, upon which the promise is conditioned.
6. They were of "one accord" as to the object, motive, and time of the answer of their prayer.
7. As is always the case when these conditions are met, victory was given. If we meet like conditions, God will come to us, and that coming will be revival; and whether the people repent and are converted as under Peter, or resent and persecute as under Stephen, victory will be the result.—M. W. Knapp.

IT WILL LIGHT YOU HOME

"A minister once went from a town into the backwoods to preach to the settlers, and found it necessary to return at night, when it was very dark. A backwoodsman provided him with a torch of pitch-pine wood. The minister, who had never seen anything like it, remarked, "It will soon burn out." "It will light you home," answered the other. "The wind may blow it out," said the preacher. "It will light you home," was again the answer. "But what if it should rain?" "It will light you home," was again the answer. Contrary to the minister's fears, the little torch gave abundant light to his path all the way home. So the Lord, who is our light and salvation, will never fail us.—Selected.

SEVEN MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCES

1. Ararat—The Mount of Promise (Gen. 8:4).
2. Sinai—The Mount of the Law—Exod. 19:20).
3. Moriah—The Mount of Jehovah (Gen. 22:1-19).
4. Carmel—The Mount of Decision (1 Kings 18:21).
5. Hermon—The Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8).
6. Calvary—The Hill of Atonement (Luke 23:33).
7. Olivet—The Mount of Power (Acts 1:8-12).—Will H. Muston, in The Expositor.

"At the beginning of every new and untried day, take time definitely and deliberately to place your life at God's disposal."

In Canada the Protestant churches include over half of the population, with the United Church of Canada leading. Two-fifths of the population is Roman Catholic, half of these being in the Province of Quebec.—The Presbyterian.