

The Interweaving of the Days

J.R. Miller:

It is a good thing to learn to live by the day. We should devote all our strength to the doing well of each day's tasks "and then should disengage ourselves altogether from its entanglements. Emerson puts it well: "Finish every day "and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely; and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. Today is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations "to waste a moment on the yesterdays."

Yet as important as is the duty of fencing off the days and keeping them separate "there is a sense in which no day stands alone. The days are links in an endless chain. Each day receives an inheritance from yesterday, and at its close passes it down to the day which comes after. We start every new day with the memories of all our days trailing after us. We have all the knowledge gathered during the years that are gone. We have also the experience of the past by which our lives have been enriched, or possibly hurt. We are bound up, too, in the associations and friendships which have been formed. In countless ways, yesterday's life and today's are intertangled. Each day is but a little section of a great web, containing one figure of the pattern, the warp running through all the days and years. A life is a serial story, opening with infancy, closing with death, and each day is one little chapter in the story.

We best prepare for tomorrow, when we make today beautiful with truth and faithfulness. Today is the blossom "tomorrow is the fruit. Today is the sowing "tomorrow is the harvest. Far more than we realize, does tomorrow depend upon today. The Bible has its promises of divine care and provision; yet all such promises imply our faithfulness in duty as the condition of their fulfillment. A link dropped in the chain of obedience and fidelity will mean a break in the continuity of the blessing. Every minute is a key which, when touched, strikes a note somewhere in the future. If the touch is a true one "it will help to make music of love and joy. If it is a wrong touch "it will make a discord in the melody of life.

If those who are preparing for their lifework had any true conception of the relation of early studies and discipline, to future power and success "they would think no work too hard, no study too exhausting, in order to make ready for their chosen calling. It is said that one of Turner's great sea-pictures has been sold recently for nearly forty thousand dollars. It is well known that Turner gave the closest attention to details. It is said, for instance, that he once spent a whole day on the shore of a quiet lake, tossing pebbles into the water, to study the effect of the sunlight on the ripples as they were started by the stone and spread over the lake's surface. His companions teased him on having wasted his day, as he had nothing to carry back to show for his visit to the lake. "But I have learned how the ripples look," he replied. "I think I shall be able to get something out of the day after all."

Turner's day was not wasted. It is to such patient attention to minute details in preparation, that his great pictures owe their wonderful perfection and beauty. Behind all worthy success, lies ever a preparation almost infinitely painstaking. Those who despise routine, technique, drill, discipline, in the days of training "never can win honors for fine attainment and achievement in after years. Self-indulgence today, means mediocrity "or less "tomorrow.

One tells of seeing a builder idly picking up a piece of wood as he stood talking to a friend. He turned it over in his hands and said: "See what a beautiful piece of oak this is. Notice the fineness of its grain. This wood will take a higher polish than a piece of ordinary oak. Can you guess why this is?" he asked. His companion could not answer, "Well, it is because the tree from which it came, had to endure a great deal of buffeting. It did not grow in a forest, sheltered by other trees. It stood apart in some field alone, and this wood gets its delicate grain from the battle with the elements which it had to wage through all its history as a tree. It was beaten on every side, and it was this experience of hardness, which has given to this piece of wood such an exquisite quality of fibre."

What is true of trees, is true also of men "they grow best, into the finest character, into manliest strength, the noblest influence "in a life of struggle, toil, self-denial. The easy life may seem more pleasant today, but it does not fit us for masterful and victorious life tomorrow.

The same law applies in spiritual life. Our tomorrow, depends upon our today. It is possible in a Christian home to put into the hearts and minds of children, such qualities and principles that they shall be able to master the world's evil, when they go out to face it. When men build a great ship to go out upon the sea, they store away in its frame enormous reserves of strength "stanch ribs of iron, immense beams and stays, massive plates of

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steel. If the vessel were being built to sail only on some peaceful river or even to go upon the ocean in quiet days â€” it would be a wasteful expenditure at such large cost, to put such enormous strength in her frame. But the builders are wisely equipping the ship for the most terrific storms she may ever have to encounter.

If we live well the days of youth and opportunity â€” we shall not fail in the days of stress and need. God is in all our life, and if we are only faithful each day as it comes, nothing but good shall fall to our lot.