



## Chapter Four Reflections on Many Subjects

### Colored Views

*Charity...thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:5,6)*

*From The War Cry (Toronto), December 12, 1898. Reprinted in Love Is All, Published by Reliance Trading Company (New York), 1908.*

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." This there is no mistaking. Here is the reason for a mother thinking her babe the perfection of childhood's charms, and for a father seeing his son to be in possessions of attractions of which few others can boast. Then, if beauty is so completely in the adoring eye, I should certainly say that the uncomely appearance, presented by some people and things is also solely to do with the unfavorable vision of the beholder.

It is not a necessary sequence that there is nothing of an admirable nature in the object because it is not discerned by the onlooker. No matter with what magnificence and artistic correctness the scene may be portrayed on canvas, if the eye lacks the perception of harmonious blending of color, or the realistic grouping of life, to such a one the picture is but a poor, bedaubed affair, whereas to an eye quickened with a perception for the beautiful, it stands as a triumph of art.

Where there is a nonperception of harmony in sound, the impression left upon the ear by the most cultured music will be that of discord. The other day I heard of a gentleman whose friend took him to a string concert of exceptional renown. After listening to the rare rendering of classical strains on the violin and cello for quite a little while, he remarked, "When are they going to begin? What a time they have been tuning up their instruments!"

And so I say, that the world of music, art and creature is largely what our perceptiveness makes it. For it is a hard matter to discern or appreciate that which finds nothing akin to our own souls, or in other words, an easy matter to cast the reflection of a sunny and glorious nature, or the shadow of an evil and suspicious mind, over deeds and lives of others.



Now, in this "Thinketh no evil," I am reminded of a qualification of charity, which beautifies everything, and at the same time of an appalling weakness which has destroyed the happy experience of many.

This spirit of evil possessing the mind is no respecter of persons. We find it in all classes, and squeezing its way in despite all manner of professions. There are thinkers of evil in every church, in every society, in every Salvation Army hall, although it is one of the most destructive and poisonous besetments to which the soul and a religious society can be subjected. It tends to make cliques and form sects in all communities, disbanding the unity of the whole. It saps the spiritual influence of the individual soul. It undermines and confounds the strongest and purest trust.

I have known one evil-thinker to overthrow a whole church – to thrust back the Christian of a long years' standing – to entrap the innocent and simple, to drag the Blood and Fire Flag through a gutter of ignominy, into which no rampant persecution could have lowered it. I have no hesitancy in saying that evil thinking is a damnable sin.

How are such people distinguished? Easily! Not because of their being so numerous, but because their faultfinding spirit is so clearly manifested in such multitudinous forms and shapes. Their attitude is suspicious, and their expression bespeaks an officious desire to peer into the secret chambers held in every heart. Their conversation is fluent and excited — they are never hard up for a story to tell; they show no delicacy in parading the misfortunes of others; they are scarcely ever stuck fast for the beginning or the ending of a tale.; they can always add either, and exaggerate the middle.

They think that they polish their own virtues by enlarging upon the faults of others. They seldom take people to mean what they seem, unless they seeming goes unfortunately against them; for they impute base motives for even virtues. They rejoice in iniquity and not in the truth.

When a sorely-tempted soul goes down and under, they say, "I told you so," and with great liberty propound the advisability of running on the French maxim, "Doubt all men till you prove





them true." They can find the flaw in every gem, the cloud in every sky, the fault in every life, and see many that were never there, and never will be.

I see evil-thinking makes us hard and unjust to those who labor in our interests, or under our authority. Somebody I was speaking to the other day said that they had never met anyone who came up to their ideal of religion – that there was "none good, no, not one;" the Christians were no better than others, but rather worse, being the bearers of an empty profession. And the speaker instanced in support of these melancholy conclusions one or two of whom she once thought well, but who afterwards showed themselves (as she termed it) in their true character.

There was a minister whom she deemed wickedly proud of his good preaching, although so fervent and earnest were his sermons that he would often faint at the conclusion of his heaviest services; and there were many others with whom she found serious fault.

But a Salvation servant was the last to fall under her scathing suppositions, for she said, "When Mary does hurry on with the work and gets through things quickly and neatly, it is only to be off to meetings, or out seeking her own in some other respect;" although she admitted that Mary was the most trustworthy girl she had in the house.

I thought, as she alighted from the car, What a perverted mind – what an absence of charity – what a spectacle of ugliness of character to which evil-thinking can reduce one!

Again, I see that evil-thinking makes us hard and unjust to those who are above us. I know those whom circumstances are all that can be desired. God has not only seemed to bless them, but favored them. He has given them companionship, home, comforts and influences. Their wages are good and reasonable.

But they complain. They nurse the feeling that they are hardly done by. They suspect the expressed inability of their employers to do better. They say he could if he would. They accuse him of a grudge toward themselves, and partiality to others. They feel badly toward those over them. They embitter their own lives whether or not they affect anyone else's when they have all reason to feel well. They are thinkers of evil. They are ensnared by that abominable sin which lies



at the root of three parts of the ingratitude which, in its blindness to advantages, often throws overboard the brightest future prospects. Then, evil-thinking makes us hard and unjust on those who are on equal standing with us – our comrade in the strife, our friend on the patch of life, our neighbor who, remembering the comrades of God, has every claim upon our merciful consideration. But the ten thousand blessings that should be bestowed upon those climbing with us the steep of time are interfered with by these evil suspicions and dark surmisings.

The man who is occupied by revolving in his mind, let alone turning over with his tongue, the weakness which he fancies can be detected in the faltering steps or the impeded journey of another, will be the last to extend a helping hand to assist one weaker than himself. Or the woman, be she Salvationist or a constant pewholder, who has ever ready a whisper detrimental to the family whose name is up at the moment, will be the last to staunch the wound of a bleeding heart or bind a breaking spirit.

I write with much sorrow that in my experience I have known many whose one and only besetting sin could be classified as evil-thinking. It may have been a bestower of goods to feed the poor, or a Salvationist, a member of the church, a frequent open-air attender, or a good public speaker – yet all the same an evil-thinker. They hold on to a bit of discreditable back history of every convert which they should be remembered; they can always throw in words calculated to hang weights on those lifted in praise of anyone. They say, "It is not what people seem, it is what they are," and leave others to wonder what they mean, while they work hard behind the scenes to undo any good impression made in the party's favor.

When they cannot circulate actual evil reports, they cast cruel insinuations, such as, "Beware of so-and-so," or with a significant nod of the head, infer that there are "dark things which they would speak, but charity makes them forbear," when in reality there are no dark things but in their own dark minds. Thus, they build almost insurmountable barriers for many young and trembling feet which have already more than enough in the cold currents of life to struggle against.

Evil-thinkers hold not back from tearing holes in the garments of the most needy and helpless. I had scarcely said, "Oh, what a dear, motherly and sympathetic soul that woman is!" when





someone overhearing my remark whispered: "Oh, she has a dreadful temper; is so fearfully irritable that I sometimes even wonder if the old soul knows what conversion means." Personal observations, however, made me detect that the woman criticized prayed much more fervently in the meetings for the souls of others than my staring-about informant, and on inquiry I learned that the former was a widow, which six children, who buried her husband seven years ago, when her youngest was an infant of two or three months.

All through the long seven years with bony fingers, rounded shoulders, burdened head and breaking heart, this mother in her widowhood had earned the bread and clothes for the six orphans, I could not help thinking when I heard the story, that even were it so that, owing to overtaxed, nerves and overwheeled limbs, this woman was guilty of sharp-speaking, how much more excusable to the Friend of the widow in whom the "fatherless findeth mercy" was her irritable tongue than the ceaseless fault-finding of the backbiting one. Instead of this evil-thinking being a slight offence, I see it to be a monstrous iniquity, hurting and blighting wherever its heavy and cruel feet tread.

The last remark I will make respecting evil-thinkers is that they must be more or less a very miserable class of people; I cannot see how it could be otherwise. They are dissatisfied with their surroundings, and their surroundings are dissatisfied with them; they see the evil in everybody, and, with isolated exceptions, everybody can see what a great deal of evil lodges in them. They point their fingers at the imaginary mote in every eye, and all around are painfully conscious of the crowd blocking up their own.

They have no real friends' none can sufficiently trust to befriend them; the general feeling is that no reputation, no matter how pure and blameless, is safe in their hands. They do not really love anyone, and while persisting in focusing their vision on the one small distant speck in every man's character, I do not see how we could expect to find many hearts that would risk love on them; did they, it would be as in the case of the servant girl, that base and selfish motives would be imputed, besmearing even virtue with the coloring of sin.

"When thine eye is single thy whole body is full of light." All this evil-thinking with the hard-heartedness, narrow-mindedness, disloyalty and self-deceivedness that it brings results from an



unclean heart, making darkness within, and casting its black pall on all without. It is a sorrowful sin, it is a terrible fault, it is a cruel besetment, a spoiling of the past, a withering of the present, a blasting of the future of course! If it is yours, run to Calvary, look to Jesus, see His face!

He thought the best possible of His murderers; He threw between their black guilt and the Father the only imaginable excuse in the cry, "They know not what they do." Seek His love, learn of His pity, ask His compassion, plead His grace, and while in the revealing light of a blameless Christ, bearing the guilt and shame of a world's sin, pour hot condemnation on your every unkind thought, harsh judgement, evil suspicion and unmerciful conclusion, and seek charity – which power alone can deliver you from the ruin in time and curse in eternity – of this hell-forged snare of the human mind – evil-thinking.

### Then – Face to Face

*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning (Psalm 30:50).*

*From The War Cry (New York), January 1, 1916.*

There is to be an inestimable and indescribable difference between our present day and our eternal tomorrow. Today the heavy shadows falling from sin, mystery and grief; tomorrow the golden breaking of cloudless light from the once-marred visage. We are to enter into His presence; we are to stand before His throne; we are to look upon His countenance; nothing between, no glass, no cloud, no time intervening, but "face to face" with Jesus, Jesus who came, Jesus who lived, Jesus who suffered, Jesus who died. Now the hazed and beclouded view, then a fadeless shining!

Now the tumult and the strife,  
Then the rest – eternal life!  
Now the weeping and the sighs,  
Then the song and the tearless eyes!

Now the children dying, then no more parting! Now the waters dividing, then no more sea! Now the grave's hearts breaking, then the resurrection greeting! Now the night winds chilling and





killing, them the morning lifting and brightening! Morning on the mountains! Morning on the plains! Morning with an eternity in it! Morning – Morning!

Oh, the transforming touch of that hour! Only intelligence irradiated by contact with the skies could give us to recognize our heaviest cross, when it comes to crown us there. We shall find our failures; they will greet us as triumphs. We shall find our bereavements; they will meet us as reunions. We shall find our loss rebounding in eternal gain. We shall find our hidden struggles crowned in open victory. We shall find our hottest tears forming coronation gems. We shall find the complete fulfillment of every promise of the Bible, the realizing of the highest hopes of the righteous, the verifying of the fondest dreams of the saints. Face to Face with Jesus; the gates of strife closed behind us, the boundary crossed; the veil torn; the morning broken.

The light gets brighter and brighter, as on the wing of revelation I climb the heights for me, and, looking through the dazzling brilliancy which only the eye of immortality can gaze into, see the massive multitude of which John says all attempts to calculation fail to estimate. All eyes are lifted to the starry lettering writing the meanings of life's every mystery.

Now these orphans see why mother and father both are taken, leaving them to tears and the cold world all alone. Now they even smile and sing, and say it was best. How glad that mother is now that the children went on first! Their little feet would have been too badly torn in life's thorny ways. That wife sees the reasons for the struggles of a long widowhood as clear as the shining of the Golden Gate. The saints of the hospital thank God for all the suffering. The bearers of the cross thank Him for the persecution; Paul, for the scourged back; Silas, for the prison cell; Ridley, for the flames, and Catherine of Sienna, for prison flags.

They all say it was best; it was best; it was dawning of the most triumphant glory in disguise. Suffering is the only ladder long enough to lift us from our low levels on earth to thrones in Heaven.

Then I hear a great sound, like as the roar of many waters; as out of the numberless multitudes of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues. Then a thousand mothers lift their voices and shout: "Blessings to our God which sitteth upon the throne! He spread His wings over my nursery



and blessed my children." Others shout, "Wisdom! He enlightened my ignorance, and by His truth taught me." Others, "Thanksgiving! He blotted out as a thick cloud my transgressions and covered my sin." Others, "Honor! He gathered me from disgrace of the outcast and redeemed my name." Others, "Power! He gave me the victory over every foe." Others, "Might! He touched my weakness and turned it into greatness."

Then the harps are strung and the seraphims sing, and the angels strike the key-note, while all the children clap their hands. Sight unequaled, sound unparalleled, light unrivaled, as the heavenly orchestra catches the strain of the numberless multitude and burst in with the chorus of the Hallelujah Anthem, singing, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever! Amen"

Oh, it is the 'face-to-face' time! No one can describe the glory. It is the crowning. It is Jesus – Bozrah's Hero, Calvary's Lamb, Resurrected Lord, the sinner's Savior. Again, the redeemed break out as every eye is cast on the wounded hands, the riven side, the thorn-pierced brow of the conquering Lord!

Worth is the Lamb, who on Calvary was slain. All along the line of march, they are waving the palms, for the Bride stands forth – the Church of God adorned in redemption's glory, while all heads that were weary in the conflicts of righteousness are crowned; hearts that were true to their calling, crowned; lives that reflected His likeness, crowned; souls washed white in His Blood, crowned. All nations at the banquet – from all places of the earth. They have pressed through the waters; they have stood in the fires; they have fought with the beasts; they have lived and died in dungeons.

There is Stephen who was stoned. There is James who was clubbed. There is Matthew who was flogged. There is Paul who was whipped and imprisoned and beheaded, and multitudes more who suffered for Jesus. They stand in the light; their garments are white; their faces are bright; they sing, they shout, they shine; they are Home; they are at the banquet; they are with Jesus; they are "face to face." No more pain, no more death, no more hunger, no tear, no sigh, no grave, no night; all morning! –The Bridal Morning – "The Bridal Morning of The Lamb!"





## This Lovely World

*From The War Cry (Chicago), July 31, 1937.*

This is a beautiful world – indescribably beautiful. Before its architectural grandeur and its artistic design, revealing the incomparable genius of its Creator, the best accomplishments of man pale into insignificance. Its mountains of rock, lifting above castles of cloud their suncrowned heads, level to the dust the most magnificent productions of the sculptor's chisel. Its blend of harmonious coloring in bird's wing, in sky blue, in snow crystal and beach coral, bewilder the wildest fancies of the painter's brush. Its captivating music, throbbing through the heart of the hills, is beyond comparison with the of the master musicians of all ages.

Great orchestras, by the skillful manipulation of instruments and exquisite interpretation of the composer's sentiments, holds vast audiences spellbound and sway their emotions. But what artists can be compared with those whom God files into the galleries of the forest to play a wedding march as all Nature breaks forth into song?

Joy of trees, hurrying on their garments of shimmering green; joy of fishes flashing their silver and gold and purple through the waters; joy of insects – artisan, architect, and artist insects – racing through a thousand activities in the sand. Joy of wings in the sky; joy of beasts in newly-adorned forest; joy of cattle on a thousand hills; joy of cataract and waterfall and rivulet, laughing themselves dizzy as they clash their crystal heels on pebbled paths. All this music is the thrill of God's heart; all of the color of blue and green and purple and saffron and rose is but the reflection of His beauty.

I read omnipotence in every blade of grass; the wooing of His love in every robin's call; divine purity in every lily; God's almighty, cleansing power in every wave of the sea; a triumphal arch in every tree branch. I see Eternal Majesty, God, Omnipotence, Creator, mighty and magnificent, riding in chariot of stars across every sky; and yet I see all heaven contained in a dewdrop.



Do we not want to put our trust in this same great God? Will not He who cares for the young in the sparrow's nest look after our children also, if we trust Him? Will not this same great God who "hath made this earth by His power," guard our best interests if we commit them to His care?

If you are a sinner, He will be your Savior. If you have wandered, He will bring you home. A friend of mine told me that his gardener one day, while attending to his duties, noticed a small bird circling round and round, uttering shrill cries of distress. He quickly saw that it was pursued by a hawk, but before he could render any assistance, the little wounded creature, exhausted by exertion and terror, fell at his feet. The gardener lifted it and found that it was torn and bleeding. He placed it in his breast, sheltering it with the warm folds of his coat, and nursed it back to health. The little thing, when offered its freedom, would not leave the gardener, but always preferred for its resting place, his coat.

I tell you that our Lord Jesus is not an austere monarch who can only be approached by elaborate ceremony and strictest adherence to court etiquette. He is One who stands in our pathway that He may shield us from the trouble and the enemies that pursue us, and hide us and shelter us beneath the folds of His mantle.

The glorious summertime, when every rose is a very carnival of color, every leaf a creature of beauty, every flower a perfection, every bird a praise, every tree a psalm, every upturned petal a prayer, I beg of you to tune your heart to the music of God's Universe and to let His love, revealed to us in our Savior Jesus Christ, flood your soul with new life and glory.