

## The Good That Is Always.

By

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In this life, it's true,  
The riches of demons  
Leave a dingy residue.  
And yet rarely comes  
Justice to virtue.  
Oft, indeed, the very  
Innocent are slain,  
Crying out  
For help in vain. Indeed,  
The more we get older,  
Evil becomes only bolder.  
Pity here has fled,  
And all that appears left  
Is the hope of being dead.  
What *then* does it matter  
Being faithful and true?

For the soul it seems  
There are two doors:  
One by faith and honesty  
To ecstasy sublime;  
Where cheerful hearts  
Adore each other  
In purity refined.  
The second door,  
Of lies and decay,  
Leads to a heaven  
Of false glory  
The duped  
And deceived to allay;  
Or else a punishing grave,  
The bourne of willing slaves.

But, of course,  
To know even this,  
Were it all  
So simple and as plain,  
Is yet to know so little.  
We think we see,  
We think we know all.  
But there is ever  
So much more  
We do not know  
And cannot see;  
Such as a bone or rock  
(A hundred miles away no less)  
Buried beneath a tree.

Or how mirrors send us back  
Exactly what's the same;  
How fire lives as air  
Or how air burns as flame;  
How placid and calm the night sky is,  
Yet whose wispy lights ever move  
And are not fixed as they seem.  
To ascend to wonder's apogee,  
You sort through existence  
Like sifting through that sea.  
One needs all infinity, that's true,  
But not in equal portion or degree;  
That the good within you may  
Echo the good that is always.

In the halls of tradition,  
In the pass of the ages,  
You give ear to those fathers  
That are our honored sages;  
While setting forth the sons  
To wherever tomorrow runs.  
To work is all good;  
For honor comes only from labor,  
And all disgrace is laziness  
That leaves nothing to savor.  
Yet work is and ought  
Not be an idol.  
And as vital is disciplined rest,  
Or fond leisure when somehow  
The time's *just right*  
To joy in the best.  
And work may be play  
As long as it is work too:  
In sum, have a good conscience  
That you may have nothing to rue.  
See Evil and Good then as merely  
Words for acting false or sincerely.  
And if by shameless theft  
You would Heaven gain,  
Receive at once, as is only mete,  
"Criminal" for your name.

So many children and animals there are  
That require our care, shelter, and rearing.  
How stout a man then is that  
Who needs be cruel and domineering?  
They are not at bottom strong  
Who will not the poor and weak protect,  
And such who fail the innocent  
Reveal innate frailty as defect.  
For *true* riches and *true* might  
Will safeguard the humblest's rights,  
And if the mild or forlorn we cannot shield  
Then all Earth's but a barren field.  
If love and charity don't hold final sway,  
Of what use is our leisure, jokes, and play?

Dirty tricks and violent strife --  
Is no way of living life.  
Let truth, mercy,  
And justice reign  
That there might be reason  
For sun, rainbow, and rain;  
Cherish as many we may  
With compassion  
Of highest quality.  
For no greater force  
Could or can there be  
But that which loves  
And makes all life free.  
Towards that sort of power  
Must we strive,  
If there be  
Meaning to being alive.  
And even if we fail  
And all the world  
Is to chaos and ruin hurled,  
Souls so loving  
Will yet endure  
Within the Spirit  
Of all that's pure.

Somewhere in its own vision of tender light  
Shimmering in tranquil beams, like unto gold,  
Lies every one or thing of lasting worth,  
Yet which sight few of us ever behold;  
Unless we be among the blest of the earth  
Looking from inspiration's threshold,  
And even then it is but a fleeting glance  
Prompted by thoughts much like romance.  
So we look to glimpse or catch, therefore,  
The shadow of true Heaven in Nature.  
Yet so fallen or blind have we become  
That Nature too has become a distant one.  
Still we feel and know she's yet there  
Though obscured by our worry and cares,  
And come such time we're no more harried  
Then once more Sky and Earth are married;  
And the Universe itself one spacious hall  
Where the flood of love suffuses all.

If God had or ever wanted to  
He could make any religion true.  
Yet if He did change  
How things ought to be,  
How would we know it was He?  
The answer to this  
Is mayhap hard to see,  
Yet in thought and heart are the key.  
The fickle senses are oft at best  
Limpid mud either moving or at rest.  
Which if we look through them for the One,

Can make Him seem as Satan, or else the sun.  
Senses then when so tricked or cajoled  
Can become sharp knives that slay the soul.  
Logic, by contrast, is more divine and pure  
Than the pristine freshets of a glacier  
By means of it we see the clearer way;  
Know false from true as night from day.  
Then there is our deepest heart  
From which all sincere affection starts.  
Love is the beacon that guides us to ought;  
That love which cannot be sold,  
That cannot be bought.  
Right thoughts and right love  
Then ever be our guide;  
Which tell us that God is innocence,  
And that innocence here's been crucified.

The life that lives in the sea,  
Which shellfish and whales call home,  
In their own peculiar state of peace,  
Lie or swim silent and deep,  
In darkness beyond our own.  
Trilobite ancient, whose fossil we find,  
What evil or sorrow could or did you know?  
Long ere Man was felled by false mind,  
What was death in hidden ages ago?  
If less then today, it's only because,  
As the record shows (and I will insist),  
All animals, even tigers and sharks,  
Eat or devour merely to subsist.  
Animals were, and indeed, are very good,  
And the only beast that ever really was  
Is the beast in our midst from outside us  
And who does not what he should.

Often it is the little ones  
Who have greater understanding.  
For while it is normally right  
To be of ourselves demanding  
And remain ensconced indoors  
With keen study and fond books,  
It is sometimes wisdom, even so,  
Surcease of good habit to brook;  
As when the animals call us,  
As they sometimes do,  
To come forth with them,  
And to become like the Indian;  
Who delights in and venerates  
The blessings of the sun.  
For hardly less  
Than princely Akhenaten,  
Do God's true creatures  
Esteem the Dawn,  
And no more pious train is there  
Than the little animals who dutifully  
Leave their hole, nest, or take to air;

Every morn to greet sunrise's span;  
Just as did their ancestors,  
Epochs before fire and Man.

And as the animals with the Dawn,  
Life itself commences with Spring,  
And we begin to see flowers appear;  
Come out more and new birds  
Whose elegant season excites;  
Tickling bees and rumbling herds;  
Or braces of green ducks  
Alighting on the scene  
To glide on waves of golden sheen.

Then God tells them  
Follow the directions:  
Built your nest with sticks;  
Look in this crevice for food;  
Flee at signs of danger;  
The infinite is a place  
Where there's always  
Room to grow.  
Yet why do I feel sadness  
Come the day the baby birds  
Left the singing of their nest?  
Then a few days later,  
Although I could not them see,  
I heard chirping explorers  
Flitting amidst a plum tree.  
Some trees, fed  
By warm or cool water,  
Change their dress  
With the annual quarter.  
So how must then must  
The birds wonder at their home?  
To live in a tree's interior,  
To fly from branch to branch,  
To fly to very tree,  
That is one life of being free.  
And what if every bird  
Did have a name?  
But if we knew,  
They do, they do...  
And the tree  
Who knows them,  
Its boughs nodding,  
Seems to nod assent  
When the soft wind  
Starts ascending.

Though as sometimes strained  
And grim the city gets,  
Beneath the raucous din  
There is yet  
A warm, humming memory  
Of the very good known here;

Reminding one of the very good  
That yet is or may be done.  
Sauntering in in pairs and packs,  
The crows still gather as friends,  
And like noble savages  
Bellow out in tribal unison.  
They caw out and reply to  
Sacred strophes of jocund song.  
And when gray dusk lowers coolly  
Then disperses that sable throng.  
Day falters; boughs begin to dance  
Bright blossoms of radiant white  
Sense and thought entrance  
In the dimming light.  
Now all who's left is a single rook,  
Solitary as the dulcet breeze,  
Strutting quietly the verdant lawn,  
Pensively like a gentleman.  
Gradually droplets start to fall,  
Tapping gently the leaves green.  
The crow thus alights to leave,  
And now comes eve.  
Soft silver patter of the rain  
Turns to a rushing downpour amain;  
That spills from the clouds  
In watery sheets and shrouds.  
Then the lightening flash;  
Then thunder distant,  
But even so, a happy flood  
That brings life to flower and bud.  
And when at last the welkin clears,  
The kind moon of May appears;  
Covering with a halo the roses' scent;  
Closing with peace one day's career.

To kiss the robin warbling,  
Perched on the roof's peak  
When day breaks,  
I am too ponderous.  
Nor less clarion or beloved  
Of a summer's morn  
Is the seagull's shout  
Skyward borne;  
Loud, prolonged, and gay;  
Like a trumpet voluntary;  
That sounds with merry joy  
The royal approach of day.  
But once on a morning  
When it was dark and overcast,  
I a lone seagull  
Who too wanted to give thanks;  
Who too wanted to laugh,  
Yet because the time was not right,  
Soon departed in humbled flight.  
These regal birds of liberty,  
After thousands of years;

Soaring over land and sea  
For what should they live?  
Of what do they dream?  
The young gulls gathered  
Ready to do what right deems;  
The veteran, afraid just a little  
At what his charges don't know,  
Has yet plenty of love to lead them  
Before on their own they go.  
Perhaps what at last he teaches is --  
"If each to other you your heart give,  
Then ultimately life should let you live."

The yellow butterfly of August  
Greets our noontime stroll,  
Yet a squirrel scampers up a tree  
And robins scurry off silently;  
In wary dread  
At the sound of our  
Approaching tread.  
Now if you look down  
The shaded lane ahead,  
You'll see bushes, trees,  
And flower beds.  
And if you listen closely,  
Hid in them you can hear  
Small birds singing cheerily.  
Sunny beams meanwhile  
Illumine the grass a vibrant green;  
While up and down  
The long path before us  
Lie purple petals of drying lilac  
Strewn in a dizzying stream.  
No flower flourishes,  
Or bud fervidly flowers;  
Such as foxglove, fuchsia,  
Snap dragon, delphinium,  
Thimbleberry, hibiscus,  
Marigolds and geranium,  
But also feeds and nourishes  
The air and the breeze.  
And no bird cheeps in isolation,  
Howsoever humble their station,  
But chimes in harmony and as one  
With the music of the Spheres;  
And though such music  
We cannot quite hear,  
We at least feel its rhythm  
In the changing of the season.

"Good" then must be love.  
Yet what is love?  
Love is the feeling  
Such as a veined leaf knows.  
Warmed by the sun;  
Flowing with water,

Filled with life.  
'Tis a spark given  
That sets one's soul aglow;  
Raising it up into  
Beauty's heart unseen.  
Yet where is love?  
Love is everywhere  
But where it isn't.  
For munificently  
He bestows His blessing;  
Is such who so can bless;  
Saying: "Have faith. Be of truth.  
Seek and you shall find."

Arriving home  
In the soft twilight  
And the thickening chill of eve,  
Tiny bush-tits come into sight;  
In and out the bush they weave.  
Twittering like a cricket,  
As they flutter in the thicket.  
Lord love and protect it.  
Yet more near or close,  
We dare not further go.  
For there Nature kisses them  
In such sanctuary and repose  
Which only innocence may know.  
Let us rest content then  
In viewing them from far,  
And perhaps one day we too  
May live the calm that they are.

Yonder where the deer step,  
An eagle skims o'er tall trees;  
Of forest crests and wooded hills;  
Ascending to a height  
Only to fall and find  
Rest in each other's laps;  
In slumber deep like  
A black mountain bear  
Taking an Autumn's nap:  
He sleeps where silence reigns;  
Only to wake and rise again.  
Yet while the pines and sequoia  
Are still a coniferous green,  
Oaks, elms, and others seen  
Are shedding leaves  
Themselves between;  
Orange, brown, red, and gold,  
Just as they did in times of old.

But though too at harvest we  
Are now more inclined  
On our own couches to recline;  
With the year more near  
To being run,



There is yet for many still  
Much work to be done.  
Even among the smallest now,  
Dame Nature herself  
Displays her busy fancies;  
As in the webs  
Of the golden spiders  
In all their fine intricacy.  
Erecting as much  
For pride and for shew,  
Arachne lays on  
The finishing touch  
To gossamer  
Glistening with dew.  
Even wasps and bees  
Will collect a bush's buds  
Gathering pollen that remains;  
While the thrifty emmet  
Refuses losing time  
To bring home labor's gains.  
While we can then,  
While we may,  
Be our own hearts  
Grateful for the day.  
And by getting something done,  
Be as votaries who plant an offering.

Not unoften are there places  
Deserted and forlorn  
Not far from where we dwell.  
And did we know them,  
What pity might we feel  
Where life lives but is unwell.  
Once after a rude storm had passed,  
When the sky looked dark,  
Somber and downcast,  
I spied a large, beautiful leaf  
Left in the road to die.  
And could it have spoke,  
Might it too have asked "Why?"  
There are many such like that  
For whom years of hoping  
Have brought no relief.  
And yet strange to think  
How easily might  
Have been healed such grief...  
But for mysterious chance,  
But for odd circumstance.

Was he so blessed  
To compensate deformity?  
Or had he been deformed  
Because he'd been too blessed?  
Was it necessary that they die  
Because they were so loved?  
Or are they now so loved

Because their death  
Made us cry?  
Oh, for an end to discord  
That destroys!  
Oh, for an end to fear  
That ever mars our joys!  
For if not by fire  
We are burnt to clay,  
Then most surely ice  
Will close our days.  
Oh, for a humble rock to be!  
That we might be unconscious  
For all futurity.  
To not hurt,  
To not be hurt,  
To always be at peace,  
Will not God at last  
Make sharp suffering cease?  
Though they dupe our friends  
Us to betray,  
Life's true trespassers  
Are sinister strangers  
Sent from far away.  
Yet though they us  
Into prisoners make,  
The chains of slavery  
Will we ever break.  
For all these trying cares  
All along were really theirs.  
And the sunshine  
Of their false hope  
Forever we forswear.

For many then  
Troubles are rarely very far.  
And even if we ourselves  
Don't in woe and worry languish,  
How cold and dead we are  
To be deaf and blind  
To others' tears and anguish.  
Although some do regret  
Winter's rains and chill,  
It is an apt time of year  
To value quiet and be still.  
And sometimes  
The calm snow brings  
Is just what's needed  
To get a proper sense of things.  
For as farmers must  
Every few years  
Leave fallow tired fields  
So that once again  
They might fecundity yield;  
So the respite  
That Winters sends  
Gives time to heal, forgive,

And make amends.  
What richer tranquility  
After all is there  
Than a newly snow bound  
December morn  
In which to walk  
And take the air?  
Our very breath we can see,  
And how lovely are the trees  
Adorned with ivory drift  
Of purest white;  
Lit up by frost,  
Moon, and starlight.

Yet for many animals,  
As well as many people,  
This time of brumal "rest"  
Is often one when  
When life is most  
Hard pressed;  
To sleep in cold burrows,  
Or lie in damp retreats;  
Or perhaps  
For food to seek  
When there's ever  
So little to eat.  
How must they weather  
Arctic sent blasts  
That on occasion  
Through Winter pass?  
Notwithstanding  
Such harsh reasons,  
Some animals lose  
None of their pluck  
In this inclement season.  
How amusing  
One winter's day  
Was the sight  
Of two brave sparrows  
Formation flying  
Within a pigeons' flight!  
Even our own furry friends  
Some cold weather  
Daring show;  
As when Fido bounds  
In deep downy drifts,  
Or when come morn  
We find Tabby's paw marks  
Trailing in the snow.

Such is but a sketch brief  
Of (some of) the mass of life,  
In all its myriad forms,  
With which the Earth is rife.  
And while in and for  
All Matter's solidity,

'Tis at last one Spirit  
That governs Life's  
Promise and floridity;  
By Him all spirits  
Are overridden,  
All must do as  
By Him is bidden.  
And despite how tangible  
The physical seems,  
Spirit is the end,  
Not the means.  
For when and how much  
Is there justice enough?  
How far does it extend?  
Of justice,  
There is never enough  
To satisfy all demand,  
But that He permits.  
And though howsoever  
Unjust, absurd, or tragic,  
A given day of life appears,  
Yet it never hurts  
To bring comfort or dry tears;  
To stand up  
And vie for what's right;  
Even though surrounded  
And engulfed by Night.  
And when things  
Get too complicate and confusing,  
Look to what it is you are;  
Choose happiness in the good.  
Keep it simple.  
Do your duty.  
Respect in your heart  
What's right.  
Be a good son, father, brother;  
Or daughter, sister, mother;  
And from the murk  
Of irrational thought  
See back to the Light.

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