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Growth and Salvation

Earl Clement Davis

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Subject; Sworth and Salvation.

Lext, For with the Heart worn behindle

unto Rightonsnew."

Cerifture.

Lessing the great Gener Philosopher once said. " Of god shortel bold all took included in his right havel, and in his left only the ever active unfulse to the furnit of tenth, although with the conclition that ashvel always and forever ere; and should say to me: Etone? I should fall with submission your his bft have and say ! tather, give ! Time Fruth is further aline" Includ Lucing might well have said . I could only choose the even active importer to the

fusuit of truth," for there is something our very notice, some former, which is the very foundation of our flyrical wenter, and word woherf. That all: works wroted biel us. yes, confel us to choose to search out a twick to give of into a tenth, withen them to have the truth handed over to us word without any struggle on cros fait. Wouldind an a whole for to fine a word votice to be willing to accept grateritionsly that for which be ought to genre he a wother of fort wo way for yet been chicerevel by which we can arive at any tweth except that Bloom converyflore

without of experience. The father curant houd our to the some the wichen which he has become the foremen of through his year of experience, but the sur hor vot had the experience that world make clear to whim the meaning of his fothers words. Woris word nature for olverys been much were keen and sensitive other his intellective notice in accepting the Bitle as weeknieve Kevelotin of Get, and Chint on an otime = ment for sin, Even while he has continuely accepted both there idean, he for never the less interfectule the Bitle in terms of his own expensive and Chirts stonewant in terms of

his own stonement. His wherest word voture for overvicteles his intellective error, and he for best himself eventionly two to this functionential characteristic of his being that he is enclosed with an ineferible infohe to geno. der how this inforce writers itself ever when we are entirely unconsciring I. We go to some familian her langlovel town, expecting to final the same town to day which we left ten years ago. It is not them, the feefle love along ch, some one dead, others have left the time, boker Ime become chilchen chilchen have beterne men. Even the vocant and deserted four in a

wormwest to wais genth, the cost of shell of les autitive days. dry to find course givenel ofur which to weet a friend that we has vot seen for year, and we soon become consider of the voit charge both in him such in ourselver, as we confare the stained difficult attempt to become again as we were in the old cloy. It bruigs have to un with a fungeway thre is startling the timed that the infohe to give for hear constantly asserting itself. Only last year of knew of a wor, who had been seahing his fortune in foreign county, and took some tome to his votice town to live the se =

waining year of his life away his old friends, and amich formibin sur ? woundings. He arrived in the worning formel his orlet friends gove wit one in all the town that he knew, the very town itself so changed that he knew it vot. He left in the evening sach and chirleatened, still wondering why it hod charged as There few facts suggest to us that which we way fuget, that we are hiring under the fresume of a former so the wearlown. that we can we were sty its activity three we sur stry the flow of a wighty ine, we may stack it for a woment bet som it heads out with or great

intensity in wow channels, but the ineferrate infolice to gure is in our own notions, and it went, and will expuse itself.

Yes. but closich-express itself? What

Recly severeled to anestal eyes.

Burning unquenchatly blown

Life and its conver flore chiquise.

(2) of the neil were lefted, what spenders two; would bround their friend like flower released; Surely they luck in us, we arel you,

Torn the angel and wer the heart.

(3) Then that growth and with in wine, Frampling fearly with the greedy swine Two like the string of a got-suit lyne Thilling with resonance divine. We see four won like the string of the got suit-lyne, thilling with usowere divine, can be writesting this churily give infohe to gen, but how. how con won that growels and roots in wise thursty fearls, with greechy surine tow comes he be in any my gwing experien to that divine unforce to gever. Con it be that the dequarkel milion of life, who fiel our bonner of conection, and our frising, Con it be that they are known somes that

fore ever felt the impoke to gever to expend, to be lifted of higher.

Put a lily helt with your relle where there is we light and sie, and that some bull while in the fee out of shore air world give with a story healthy flut flowering in the reason, will in the slankness of the cellar genr of sick into a fole, sichly flut withert strength and with out hearty. Shut a hower sent out of the light of Normales and the wouth of high ideals, defrive it of its freedom its right to seek these ends towards which its growth wifele it, and the human sort will germ into form of wort sickly sin, and

wort loothing criminolity. The chunkand whom we ment on the street way he what he is because he has sought to expens his social nature when the only affertuity he boil wer the solow, and the only form of social interconnec he knew wor the low sulgar tofformen of the state, for and I have had better offertimities, and Ruew a higher flair upon which to exchange our intent in each atter.

Fork at the French sevolution, and see

the holf crayed work, seeking in its

blind aginouse to asset its righted

and demonding with the frengy of a

wild heart the destruction of its ferse:

cuture. The Swine impose to geom?

yer, but undirected untrained, the street of former of the enslowed force but like a whirtwind across the folitical history of France, and demonded at the frist of the huife its right to grow. The blood from a similar outher in Partie /huma is housely cold. Of all the terrible seems that the Russim sevolt frevented, the west fotherie, the wort filiable, was that of the thousands of volker wered runkur rushing blively though the city steets, hent upon fillage, and slangther, as little able to use froferly there werentary freedom, on a child. For think that men five heen so defrued of the rights of eclication, and frealen

of speech and thought, that in a wors ment of freedow they become as a chere of will animals. God grant that vot one word of reusene way fore from our lifes, but let us fugue them for they know not what they do. It toke a Bolyon to see the Since spirit working in the single fevent life of Europe. It topes a dicte theyor to bring out the heartiful sine from wringed lift of Jean bolgion, the golly show scinivol. Howthere to see in Hester Prine, an ingined, brused some trying to find its my though sin to gest. Only sichis swell fiction the terrible deeds of the French Borolution

so that were could see the inefectors infolice to growth woni feeting itself in three tenible chys.

Somehow, even the won athet givels and route in the mine, and transfer fearls with the greedy swine, is working his way out of clarkness, egiverance and sin into the light of freedom. - and it-way he it-way he that you swel I are as much at fault as they of the mine.

But what shell me slo? I hell me leave them to find their very out as heat they way. To, me count sho that, the me furifle impose to growth is in us also. No con vit stem the injetus which as

causing us beyond the briger of our our selfish interests, and Juring us to regard the good of other. alwely the ideals are in our minds which must say us in sympthy and service to help the les futurete some the worth flacer, and though the clarkeness into the ways of life, where sin gives way to winter, where high and worke thoughton chive out the line and sulgar, where feare and boffines and offertunity for fre gunth. sufflirt wont, and fair, and siffled sur :

interesting feath of worden engineering

wor accomplished at the worth of the Twis: is siffe River. The great strength of the river current wor containtly brunging clown to the worth of the river vort grant his of sand which were defusited at the worth of the sine or the name widewed and the strength of the cured levened This ferred an affairtly insurum takes banier to shiffing, until friendly a won of former conseined of a flow for 12 = leining the circlitions. His flew were simply this, Hz constructed lunge wotherses of brush, frimly weren together, Then there worthouser were heavily weighted with store, and such on either side of the sive leaving a us chownel

between of sufficient width to for shiffing. There withauses filled one on top of the other become effective in tuning the great for bock of the water into the chrwel between them, and the very force of the woter which had shood itself out over so vortan area, and coused so week twofle, were work turned to the work of keeping clean a chounce for shiffing. The sauch and dut which the river book formerly deforited in such a way as to hinder shiffing, with vow carried by the of siven itself out with the goef out of the way the fringle of it is this, the very free which fool brought with it the savel and refuse

wor wall we of by directing it with froger chronels, in futting that sand out of the way where it would we longer interfere with shiffing. Ehrt some ineferible infuhe to growth, which comes such a bruden of farin, aftet and depoil Them in the may of frequences it went flow will if directed with ferfer chomels, carry those some farrious offetities and derives savely out of the way when they can by we fourthisty ingine or retard the frogues of wir growth into highest and wohlest con: cefties of life. Un we look book men the history of wow, and see the great souls who gener to the Leights of

collect witherer of the togets, or we study the truth which they have dischard to us, and estimated the director in which it learn us, it seems on if this great free figle, with its free government. with its freedom of thought, and freedom of feers. with its preschen of religious life; it seems on if this great derversay swith is system of echecation, and its high retigions ichols, is the great engin: see who is to direct the flood of guring humity into its frofen cherusts. and vouslesofe to were his sofe forge though the years of forsion and affetile and selfishers, into the ofen sea of woture workood, where great

and workered way have free free

We count one estimate the tremendous obstales to be overcome, Sometime, they seem so guet as to overwhehe un by their very greation. The great invocals that are being woole of growth, by the derible diseases which works have in our wicht, must be rechreed to a minimum, Great inlettretort evor which cost a shadow one us like a floque must be revoved. Gust word misconception which we esting at the very with of the formily, state and the church, must be set aught.

The task salls for watle men and women inspired by the highest religious and word aims of which the humon sine is cyfitle, men avel mouren who har a righteons bothed foll sin, all even, but who have a sley since love for the sime, and the ening; the task colle for men and women, who in their former, in their churched, in the towns in which they live, way by the very simplicity, and consecration of their lines become a formeful force in closing this great work of wow, of growing of who the truth of god. Its must remember shows the fort that it a growth, It com= out come to us as divine Fist, me court

give it to other as remedy which will cure in a woment. The truth of Christinity transflanted into the lives of the genne ferfle, corled vot fiveluce a futher for huncheds of years. It took fine hurchest years for the seeds of the English Reformation to take wort, and gumand hear fruit in the religions freechm of worlen thought. It toker time for a feefle to absent a tweth, and have it become a wital fact of clarly life and cluty. If we get discovaged let us book book one the centures of birting, and see the things we have excepted, if we get disenvoyed It us look to the ideals of the and were which have

been severled to un by suitainer of the buth. If me get discoveraged let us remember that the inefrest the wiffine to the furint of truth is very fundation of our voture, and that Rune truth is with fool, all the sin, all the governme sel the selfishmen of wrise count stem for one woment the working of that impohe to give into the buth. You and I are consecrated to this life of gurett, at so before the it leads us into father of woble thoughts, and and great before but let us vot fuget thre when this impers: ifte influhe leads into ways of sin, and fair and shame. With the heart every howen being believet unto eightensver

but the work he travels, way defend your

Growth and Salvation

Earl Clement Davis

Pittsfield, MA¹

No Date

Scripture:

Text: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."2

Lessing, the great German philosopher, once said,
 If God should hold all truth in his right hand,
 and in his left only the ever active impulse to
 the pursuit of truth, although with the condition
 that I should always and forever err; and should
 say to me: Choose! I should fall with submission
 upon his left hand and say, 'Father give! Pure
 Truth is for thee alone.'3

Indeed Lessing might well have said, "I could only choose the ever active impulse to the pursuit of truth." for there is something [in] our very nature, some power, which is the very foundation of our physical, mental and moral make up that always would bid us, yes compel us, to choose to search out a truth, to grow up into a truth, rather than to have the truth handed over to us without any struggle on

¹ While this manuscript has not date, an incomplete earlier version of this sermon, "Irrepressible Impulse to Growth," shares a sheet of paper (its last page on one side is the first page of another sermon on the other side) with a sermon, "The Richness of the Religious Life," that bears similarities in subject and treatment with yet another sermon, "Obedience to the Will of God," that was pretty certainly given at the Unity Church in Pittsfield, MA.

² Romans 10:10.

³ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), German philosopher. This quote has been translated from his *Eine Duplik Schriften*, Vol. V, p. 147. It is possible Earl Davis gook this from a more contemporary history. Several I have found include versions of this quotation (with differences likely due to differences in translation). For example, K. R. Hagenbach's 1870 *History of the Church in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870, p. 288.

our part. Mankind as a whole has too fine a moral nature to be willing to accept gratuitously that for which he ought to grow. As a matter of fact no way has yet been discovered by which we can arrive at any truth except by that slow commonplace method of experience. The father cannot hand out to his son the wisdom which he has become the possessor of through his years of experience, but the son has not had the experience that would make clear to him the meaning of his father's words. Man's moral nature has always been much more keen and sensitive than his intellectual nature in accepting the Bible as a mechanical Revelation of God, and Christ as an atonement for sin. Even while he has outwardly accepted both these ideas, he has never the less interpreted the Bible in terms of his own experience and Christ's atonement in terms of his own atonement. His inherent moral nature has overridden his intellectual error, and he has kept himself essentially true to this fundamental characteristic of his being that he is endowed with an irrepressible impulse to grow.

See how this impulse manifests itself even when we are entirely unconscious of it. We go to some familiar New England town, expecting to find the same town today which we left ten years ago. It is not there, the people have changed, some are dead, others have left the town, babes have become children, children have become men. Even the vacant and deserted farm is a monument to man's growth, the cast off shell of less ambitious days. Try to find common ground upon which to meet a friend that we have not seen for years, and we soon become conscious of the vast change both in him and in ourselves, as we compare the strained difficult attempt to become again as we were in the old days. It brings home to us with a pungency that is startling, the truth that the impulse to grow has been constantly asserting itself. Only last year I knew of a man who had been seeking his fortune in a foreign country and had come home to his native town to live the remaining years of his life among his old friends, and amid familiar surroundings He arrived in the morning, found his old friends gone, not one in all the town that he knew, the very town itself so changed that he knew it not. He left in the evening, sad and disheartened, still wondering why it had changed.

These few facts suggest to us that while we may forget that we are living under the pressure of a power so tremendous that we can no more stay its activity than we can stay the flow of a mighty river. We may check it for a moment but soon it breaks out with as great intensity in new channels. But the irrepressible impulse to grow is in our natures, and it must, and will express itself.

Yes, but does it express itself? What do we see about us?
(1) If the veil were lifted, what bells would glow?
Redly revealed to arrested eyes.
Burning unquenchable below
Life and its commonplace disquise.

- (2) If the veil were lifted, what splendors too. Would burst their prison like flowers released. Surely they lurk in us, me and you. Man the angel and man the beast.
- (3) Man that grovels and roots in mire, Trampling pearls with the greedy swine Man like the sting of a God-smit lyre, Thrilling with resonance divine.⁴

We can see how man, like the string of the God-smit lyre, thrilling with resonance divine, can be manifesting this divinely given impulse to grow. But how? How can man that grovels and roots in mire, trampling pearls with greedy swine, how can he be in any way giving expression to that divine impulse to grow? Can it be that the degraded victims of life, who fill our houses of correction and our prisons, can it be that they are human souls that have felt the impulse to grow, to expand, to be lifted up higher?

Put a lily bulb into your cellar where there is no light and air, and that same bulb which in the free out-of-doors air would grow into a strong healthy plant flowering in due season, will in the darkness of the cellar grow up into a pale sickly plant without strength and without beauty. Shut a human soul out of the light of knowledge and the warmth of high ideas, deprive it of its freedom, its right to seek these ends towards which its growth impels it, and that human soul will grow into forms of the most sickly sin, and most loathing criminality. The drunkard whom we meet on the street may be what he is because he has sought to express his social nature when the only opportunity he had was the saloon, and the only form of social intercourse he knew was the low vulgar buffoonery of the street. You and I have had better opportunities, and knew a higher plain upon which to exchange our interest with each other.

 $^{^4}$ This poem is printed without attribution in *The Spectator*, January 21, 1905, p. 86.

Look at the French revolution, and see the half-crazed mob, seeking in its blind ignorance to assert its rights and demanding with the frenzy of a wild beast the destruction of its persecutors. The Divine impulse to grow? Yes, but undirected, untrained, the stored up power of that enslaved force burst like a whirlwind across the political history of France and demanded at the point of the knife its right to grow. The blood from a similar outbreak in Russia is hardly cold. Of all the terrible scenes that the Russian revolt presented, the most pathetic, the most pitiable, was that of the thousands of vodka-crazed workmen rushing blindly through the city streets, bent upon pillage and slaughter, as little able to use properly their momentary freedom, as a child. To think that men have been so deprived of the rights of education, and freedom of speech and thought, that in a moment of freedom they become as a drove of wild animals. God grant that not one word of censure may pass from our lips, but let us forgive them for they know not what they do.

It takes a Balzac to see the Divine spirit working in the simple peasant life of Europe.⁵ It takes a Victor Hugo to bring out the beautiful soul from [the] wronged life of Jean Valjean the galley slave criminal.⁶ Hawthorne to see in Hester Prynne, an injured bruised soul trying to find its way through sin to God.⁷ Only Dickens could picture the terrible deeds of the French Revolution so that man could see the irrepressible impulse to growth manifesting itself in these terrible days.

Somehow, even the man that grovels and roots in the mire, and tramples pearls with greedy swine, is working his way out of darkness, ignorance and sin into the light of freedom, and it may be, it may be that you and I are as much at fault as they of the mire.

But what shall we do? Shall we leave them to find their way out as best they may? No, we cannot do that, the irrepressible impulse to growth is in us also. We cannot stem the impetus which is carrying us beyond the horizon of

⁵ Honoré Balzac (1799-1850).

⁶ Victor Hugo (1802-1885); reference to his 1862 novel *Les Miserables*.

⁷ Nathanial Hawthorne (1804-1864); reference is to his 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter*.

our own selfish interests and forcing us to regard the good of others. Already the ideals are in our minds which must carry us in sympathy and service to help the less fortunate over the rough places and through the darkness into the ways of life, where sin gives way to virtue, where high and noble thoughts drive out the low and vulgar, where peace and happiness and opportunity for free growth supplant want, and pain and crippled conditions.

A few years ago one of the most interesting feats of modern engineering was accomplished at the mouth of the Mississippi river. The great strength of the river current was constantly bringing down to the mouth of the river vast quantities of sand which was deposited at the mouth of the river as the river widened and the strength of the current lessened. This proved an apparently insurmountable barrier to shipping until finally a man of power conceived of a plan for relieving the conditions. His plan was simply this. He constructed huge mattresses of brush firmly woven together. Then these mattresses were heavily weighted with stones, and sunk on either side of the river leaving a channel between of sufficient width for shipping. The mattresses piled one on top of the other became effectual in turning the great bulk of the water into the channel between them, and the very force of the water which had spread itself out over so vast an area, and caused so much trouble, was now turned to the work of keeping clean a channel for shipping. The sand and dirt which the river had formerly deposited in such a way as to hinder shipping is now carried by the river itself out into the Gulf, out of the way. The principle of it is this. The very force which had brought with it the sand and refuse was made use of by directing it into proper channels, in putting that sand out of the way where it would no longer interfere with shipping. That same irrepressible impulse to growth, which carries such a burden of passion, appetite and desire of the flesh through which it must flow and deposits them in the way of progress will, if directed into proper channels, carry these same passions, appetites and desires safely out of the way where they can, by no possibility, impinge or retard the progress of man's growth into highest and noblest capacities of life. As we look back over the history of man, and see the great souls who grow to the heights of [sic] called witness of the truth, as we study the truth which they have disclosed to us, and estimated the direction in which it leads us, it seems as if this great free people, with its free government, with its

freedom of thought and freedom of press, with its freedom of religious life; it seems as if this great democracy with its system of education and its high religious ideals is the great engineer who is to direct the flood of growing humanity into its proper channels and vouchsafe to man his safe passage through the years of passion and appetite and selfishness into the open sea of mature manhood where great thoughts and high conceptions of duty and manhood may have full free play.

We cannot over-estimate the tremendous obstacles to be overcome. Sometimes they seem so great as to overwhelm us by their very greatness. The great inroads that are being made up growth, by the terrible diseases which make havoc in our midst, must be reduced to a minimum. Great intellectual errors which cast a shadow over us like a plague must be removed. Great moral misconceptions which are eating at the very vitals of the family, state, and the church, must be set aright. The task calls for noble men and women, inspired by the highest religious and moral aims of which the human soul is capable, men and women who have a righteous hatred of all sin, all error, but who have a deep sincere love for the sinner, and the erring. The task calls for men and women who in their homes, in their churches, in the towns in which they live, may, by the very simplicity and consecration of their lives, become a powerful force in doing this great work of man, of growing up into the truth of God. We must remember always the fact that it [is] a growth. It cannot come to us as Divine Fiat. We cannot give it to others as remedy which will cure in a moment. The truth of Christianity transplanted into the lives of the German people could not produce a Luther for hundreds of years. It took five hundred years for the seeds of the English Reformation to take root, and grow and bear fruit in the religious freedom of modern thought. It takes time for a people to absorb a truth, and have it become a vital part of daily life and duty. If we get discouraged let us look back over the centuries of history, and see the things we have escaped; if we get discouraged let us look to the ideals of life and man which have been revealed to us by witnesses of the truth. If we get discouraged let us remember that the irrepressible impulse to the pursuit of truth is [the] very foundation of our nature, and that Pure Truth is with Good. All the sin, all the ignorance, all the selfishness of man cannot stem for one moment the working of that impulse to grow into the truth. You and I are consecrated to this life of growth. It so happens that it

leads us into paths of noble thoughts, and great hopes. But let us not forget those whom this irrepressible impulse leads into ways of sin and pain and shame. With the heart every human being believeth unto righteousness, but the road he travels may depend upon you and me.