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Action and Reaction

Earl Clement Davis

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Subject: actini and Reaction Periftue: Int. 2 5 14-30 Tht. 18 21-28. "Lext. Int. 16 " For who soever would sove his life mared stoll love it; and who soever stoll love his bigs for my some shoel soveil. The great volue of the soppings of ferre as they are given to us, serts when the fact that they represent the course every day experiences of life interfacted in terms of great fringles that under lie all life. Hue as she where we find a living truth, of volve to shy as it was in the time of fewer, and har aboverys been, a truth of mineral offication. One of the wort striking truther that we we wode to see as me your into wonkool and wow on hovel, is this that in furfation as

our interests miden and extend thursday and me some to direct our attention away from our selves, and ideate by ourselves with the life and interests of other, our over life assumed new forver, and me find a greater and deefer richness in loving. you never find a ferrow who is deeply and fairingtely in in another furen, a work of service, wa great reform, that is some fassimistic or disrotisfiel with life. you never find a ferre, who is self centred, introspective and unisiterested in any ferrer aricle from him : seef, that is not complaining, initable and forever finding fault with the for world. We count foint to historic illustrations of This latter close of puple, because they

are never able to rive to foritions of in : I fortame, and if forture hoffens to have flored them in responsible florer in life they soon give mariow, because contracted and defait from this wold leaving behind my a disgrace for record of grachool decy. We can foit to were all though history who illustrate so foritedly the former close that one feels sometimes or thrigh all guint and figues in the world bod been the could of men who in the service of the world have lost their life, only to find it satured to them with a thresand fold richness, housed and actonical, all the great fughets Awar. Horea Jeren, and counter others down though the centuries have been men who go have

tuned themselves any from their own intant of wetwe and seef seeking, and devoted them : selves to the good of other, my to find that in that life of service they french chiconnecl the twent and deepert former of hiving, In on our day we have two the votable examples of such a life. In the story of Booker P. Workingtin's tige life, we find a un where life is full to over flowing with all that wohen by worth while. Do you we hear him conflain became the duys are too long, or life is not satisfying Do you we see him uning about for some kick of an usement in which he con Rill time, and then for any the meany hour, the the embary his only simplaint

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men lecture, and reach, is became they tope to enjoy withinky the withum of 00 an abunding life, and feel the atworthere of joy and the that surrounds a ferror who lives in the discovered bigs of service. more funne here sich, and discutented and die an unturely death from the list of sure thing to do, the fun overwork, and hove institution love their hold, and decy became they fail to grasp at the idea of service. the because they do too much work. The fundamental findifle of all healthy living is expected in the work of form, and who understood better Them he, For whoreaver world sure his life shell love it, and who seemen shell

saur his bife four wy some shall serve it. But let us see how this works, this life of service. What is the fuit eventil, what method must were follow in achen to serve the wold," on the first flore absolute self superior, absol. who device of the volue of things that interent each are of is in an abunchity upon the fore of it. It was whe flaces on volue at all upon his our life, upon his own Thoughts ofm his rom affiritions thereby forts him seef in a forition of vot being the to understand a affection is work for the twest and best interester of other. When you and datterft to decide just hom for it is winte for an to devote on schen to our our interests

and do those things that seems self centered and selfiction in violation of the regard for others we must remember that we count she for other will we have fint done something for ourselves, until we have absorbed when our our life semething that would be of volve to three when we would seene, of any alteristic ferm should cave to us, and say I fercieve that your formen to affreciate at has not been wetworked. Twoy doffer you my services." In our enthusian me accept the kind offer, and los we chis come that on hind hearted friend an hardly tell an it fainting from a Sundry forfer hours. We dismins him with or work contery as fourthe, he the some way we chimins the

unleaned teacher of any of the arts of life, but the cliwy is reached when we are officehed by a sove of kivel interties who sups, for me in tootle, Something about your wowen tells we that you werd the confort and your ghthy that I wyste to give, He forecles to comport on by hamphing much his feet every thing that in dean and saced to us, simply became he does not know that a human such an hide within its secret charber thoughts and sorrows and fain that are too sacred to be expred to the goge of one who close out understind, avel has never had a source the world thank such a one to keep his chiterce, in truth you and I work the ministered untor by me who her wat ministered with him self, who

has vo conception of the volue of his own sul 5. of his own thoughts, his own bofer, a won who for wothing himself count serve us, vor en we save other until we ouseher are some :-Thing. Swely Temeson mys the why gift is a forting they self. The must bleed for me : But four different it is when we came in contact with one who values his our life, who has worked hard and fersistantly to become whit their, who realizes the greatures of his our send, the Divine origin of whatever in him speaks of things that are fine and single. stewert, while we reject the officer of one who has not roted life highly, we turn with ofer and, and are mivard longing to me who has a high conception of his life.

I read with indifference the reports of conventions of home life, but my sere is stimed to its defter as I see in the fime the delicote tircher that manifest the fate conception of the home bigs, They are the surfohan conferring of a vote sort that finch its quotest joy in that flace which alma in all the world in the costle. Share I sit and drich in the fleasures that you can give we, because they are infinite fleamento yor. The con share the delight with which a burinan were does his work, or a shilled workow user his tools, if we can bet feel that he enjoys his work, and bolds it in high esteen, and be con minister unto un became

be has something to give. How we ofen ou invort notices to any un who when himis seffaul his work, how we shot ourches of and fush from us the blags dillitatist who offects to score all lotor, and thes to in: free in of his sufericrity by his inflifferance to unreline thing . The musicion who has gained a ghingse of the hearty avel chann of unicol experior and fut his sort into the effect to speak to up though his music the deep thoughts and befor that stie within him. We use listen for hours to the flyer who is bleeding for us, who is forming into they floging all his form all his forming, so that you and I way get a ghinghe of the truther he sees

le fainter sees some great lour of hearty or cour in a hit of landscope, and with old the forming of his at he transfer that hit of lucheope to the convous for you and we to offreciote. He comes ofme some ferrer in when he sees some whing formin, that colors and livers the whole some, and he futs that face into wever that we way see the Divine in commungloce. Celia Beaux, on she faints her fortiai's, has some read to be some story or some heartiful forroze of literature that states her some to its defther, and in the micht of her sympothetic tears she sees the face that she is fainting as the enfrance of the quat thoughts that are sweeping though her mind like the wover of a singhty ser,

It is because she can see the greatures of the thoughts in her own life that she is oble to see them in others. and give to others of her own greaters. Ho only those who have justly afficiated the duties and obligations that they our to themselves, can enter into the secrets of your life and unive, and unister unto mus needs, they must bleed for us, athey convot help us, for minister into other, to sewe them, to more them see the great whing forsion the heavity and going of living we must first see it our salves and give alurches of to it. Me do vot have to wait with a certain standard of frefration has been allained before we give ourcluse of to the life of

Service. We are so worke that each me of us has severthing that is of volue to other, sime in churchool characteristic that chitinguistes. each individer from every other being in the world, the wit- of his inclinicholity is his diflerro of fitners to become of service To the worked in seme sefacity, what teacher has out at Times felt hunself the fufie as the fufil undelendy is train formed into the teacher as he for offertunity to differ that forver that is his. But in truth each one has his hindatas as well, and feels the used of help, and instruction from other, For as a mother of fact, as some se me are, we are teacher, and fifies at the same line. Is some as we are

16 able to realize This, we are in a fair way to afficients that great teaching of ferrer. One never comes to a free office of his own former intil he is collect ofen to exercise it, and in exercising it he finds it enfords ing, and developing, The work the unisicion to give of his former, the for work he has. The less he gives, the lus he has, the work a reformer gives of that spirit within him that worker him a reformer, the work te for left to give the requires to give, he losses that which he abevely had, I wat that the meaning of the for after of the total. The wow who fort his tolents out to service, finds that they dorfle in volue, the who represes

to fot them to service, finds that in due time they wat only do not incease but they actively become len and les until the totest how entirely direfleared, and The wor stuck lafere the world a can: flainer and a feriuint. There is a low of Physics that says to each and every Action there is an officite and egroe writer. He very force that drives the hallet took from the sifle, also chives the sifle boch in the officity direction from undrich the wellet goes, and with equal face. The distances which the two bochies travel will defend ofor the rotin of the weight of the bullet to the weight of the gun. She some is twe in our intellection

life, the teacher leaves as much on the figie, the very effort that he wohen to impart his knowledge to other, reacts ofor himself, and chargies and fixer work findy that which he would there teach. My service of goodness, or have dive for another reends it self ofor the sort of the closer, as quickly and as accurtly as comes the record of the rifle; Shot is a very chavote and impersive expression of this idea in the character of tooclan Deproze in Dichais tole of Low liter, Thachen Depuze site quietly behind the counter in the same Shop, and Muits, Mits, about Multing the second of convertation and events that toke flore in that littly hickdam ortof

19 the way flore in Pains. When the day some and for Smilletine site in judge went of the victions of the Boothetin, Toolane Definge in always uncoverling, uncoverling and the unening tertiming of her terti: way down were ofter won to death. back act, good a hal, each thought for or impre, each type, selfish or unselfich is recorded on one own sive, and helps to woke of the sum total of whit me as to day, and fits us with the former with which we fore to = wour this unening how of action is for men at work, of the dead, the thright, the imprace is me of unselfich interest in another, vot only is the other benifitel, but the

20 Fother who see the in secret, will recurferce the. but if the deed be mean, selfish and and me mil aho be seconferred with an great accuracy. Who so we would some his life, unt Toke his locut, he it, me, 2. 5 a 1000. and with that tolent with which he has feer evelwer to serve the world, he want Ture any firm himself, and fut his while heart and sort into the minim of woking others see that which wohen by sacred to him, It way be in one enjointy with way be in another, but to that dury he is collect, and to it he must respect if he misher to find lof with and satisfying. If life seems communiflace and uninter =

21 erting, if time hangs beauny on form buch I the worked seems to tool to hive in, and you one former are not furferly understood let us the away from those thoughts, size about yourself and fut your lolet to use in the world, and behold the time will seem too shat to do the things that we werd to de, and we shall find in the world out the sin, and the michechan that me thought the wor over whething us, but me will find goocher in every byz, and the drive former of every one waiting for us to minister into theme, and show them the foring our life, as 3 the hungry andience hangs on the words of an active wow like Booken

Woshington, or Jorok Rics, and observe sowething of the first of life that they his we tot feel the need of. hat with les free door this serve gefly to this church, Mr have the lolent, wat me is two, or fine, but a thrisand, and the need that the world fields for our tolent is so affirent, so forced have upon us by the disfairing twe that characterizen the churcher that are in setent hefere the rafiel forgers of the fineifler of Free Inquiry and inchard arthrity, colly up to a service as woble as even institution book the offertunity of ching. I wall are editived this week in a devouivotionel fofer, which said that

23 the generation of young wer and wowen that are growing into fine ver, and without any seligions training or thoughts. They are indeed without the faith of a formen chy, but if there are aburchy within their minds the gener of a stronger deeper single faith, that shall woke them servents avel lobrer in an eye of defer the spintool face the the wold has yet seen. For that service me are colled to show to the who are großing ofter light amich the mins of history, the light which too showe, and is shiring vom with unegrollal sflerchen in the witht of darkon living active gaving freet. We har our tobut

the wold week un, so let in fright ourches, and twee to the needs of the world, and as me serve the wold avel bring light to them, they showing unfind and bring light to us, Shough we seem to love one high for their whe we shall find it in them richen and worz heartiful, and even = giving and exporting. he greater truth of life has even been spoken than this of Jerus. For who soever worked some his life sholl love, and whosever shell live his bog for my some shell find it,

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Action and Reaction

Earl Clement Davis

Harvard University

No Date

Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30; Matthew 16:21-28.

Text: Matthew 16:25, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

The great value of the sayings of Jesus as they are given to us rests upon the fact that they represent the common everyday experiences of life interpreted in terms of great principles that underlie all life. Here or elsewhere we find a living truth, of value today as it was in the time of Jesus, and has always been, a truth of universal application.

One of the most striking truths that we are made to see as we grow into manhood and womanhood is this, that in proportion as our interests widen and extend themselves and we come to direct our attention away from ourselves, and identify ourselves with the life and interests of others, our own life assumes new power, and we find a greater and deeper richness in living. You never find a person who is deeply and passionately in in [sic] another person, a work of service or a great reform, that is soon pessimistic or dissatisfied with life. You never find a person who is self-centered, introspective and uninterested in any person aside from himself that is not complaining, irritable and forever finding fault with the world. We cannot point to historic illustrations of this latter class of people because they are never able to rise to positions of importance, and if fortune happens to have placed them in responsible places in life they soon grow narrow, become contracted and depart from their world leaving behind only a disgraceful record of gradual decay. We can point to men all through history who illustrate so pointedly the former class that one feels sometimes as though all growth and progress in the world had been the result of men who in the service of the world have lost their life, only to find it returned to them with a thousand-fold richness, honored and

admired. All the great prophets, Amos, Hosen, Jesus, and countless others down through the centuries have been men who have turned themselves away from their own interests of {???} and self-seeking, and devoted themselves to the good of others, only to find that in that life of service they discovered the truest and deepest power of living. In our own day we have two notable examples of such a life. In the story of Booker T. Washington's life,¹ we find a man whose life is full to overflowing with all that makes life worthwhile. Do you ever hear him complain because the days are too long, or life is not satisfying? Do you ever see him {???} about for some kind of amusement in which he can kill time, and thus pass away the weary hours? On the contrary, his only complaint is that the days do not contain hours enough, and life is likely to be too short. In that book, The Making of an American,² we see the same truth brought out with such {???} as to make us believe that indeed the Kingdom is coming. Jacob Riis never complains about the commonplaceness of living, for he has a purpose in living that would keep him occupied if he lived to be as old as the pyramids of Eqypt. One cannot breath the atmosphere in which these men live without absorbing something of their abounding life. The reason why people who never do anything for others, or allow themselves to become absorbed in some {???} passion of life go in such numbers to hear such men lecture, and read is because they hope to enjoy vicariously the richness of an abounding life, and feel the atmosphere of joy and hope that surrounds a person who lives in the discovered life of service. More people become sick and discontented and die an untimely death from the lack of something to do, than from overwork. More institutions lose their hold, and decay because they fail to grasp at the idea of service than because they do too much work. The fundamental principle of all healthy living is expressed in these words of Jesus, and who understood better than he, "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall save it."

¹ Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), American educator, first President of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, now Tuskegee University, and influential spokesman for Black Americans between 1895 and 1915.

² Jacob Riis (1849-1914), notable "muckraking journalist," published *The Making of an American*, in 1901.

But let us see how this works, this life of service. What is the first essential? What method must we follow in order to serve the world?

In the first place absolute self-suppression, absolute denial of the value of things that interest each one of us is an absurdity upon the face of it. A man who places no value at all upon his own life, upon his own thoughts, upon his own aspirations, thereby puts himself in a position of not being able to understand or appreciate or work for the truest and best interests of others. When you and I attempt to decide just how far it is right for us to devote ourselves to our own interests and do those things that seem self-centered and in violation of the regard for others, we must remember that we cannot do for others until we have first done something for ourselves, until we have absorbed into our own life something that would be of value to those whom we would serve. If any altruistic person should come to us and say, "I perceive that your power to appreciate art has not been cultivated. May I offer you my services?" In our enthusiasm we accept the kind offer, and lo! we discover that our kind-hearted friend can hardly tell an oil painting from a Sunday paper {???}. We dismiss him with as much courtesy as possible. In the same way we dismiss the unlearned teacher of any of the arts of life. But the climax is reached when we are approached by a soul of kind intentions who says, "You are in trouble. Something about your manner tells me that you need the comfort and sympathy that I ought to give." He proceeds to comfort us by trampling under his feet everything that is dear and sacred to us, simply because he does not know that a human soul can hide within its sacred chambers thoughts and sorrows and pains that are too sacred to be exposed to the gage of one who does not understand and has never had a sorrow. We would thank such a one to keep his distance. In truth you and I cannot be ministered unto by one who has not ministered unto himself, who has no conception of the value of his own soul, of his own thoughts, his own hopes. A man who has nothing himself cannot serve us, nor can we serve others until we ourselves are something. Truly Emerson says, "The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me."³

³ From Ralph Waldo Emerson's (1803-1882) essay, "Gifts," in his *Essays: Second Series*, published in 1844.

But how different it is when we come in contact with one who values his own life, who has worked hard and persistently to become what he is, who realizes the greatness of his own soul, the Divine origin of whatever in him speaks of things that are pure and eternal. While we reject the offices of one who has not noted life highly, we turn with open arms, and an inward longing, to one who has a high conception of his life.

I read with indifference the reports of conventions where thousands of women have assembled to consider problems of home life, but my soul is stirred to its depths as I see in the home the delicate touches that manifest the poetic conception of the home life. They are the unspoken confessions of a noble soul that finds its greatest joy in that place which alone in all the world is the castle. There I sit and drink in the pleasures that you can give me, because they are infinite pleasures to you.

We can share the delight with which a businessman does his work, or a skilled workman uses his tools, if we can but feel that he enjoys his work, and holds it in high esteem, and he can minister unto us because he has something to give. How we open our inmost natures to any man who values himself and his work. How we shut ourselves up and push from us the blasé dilettantist who affects to scorn all labor, and tries to impress us of his superiority by his indifference to mundane things!

The musician who has gained a glimpse of the beauty and charm of musical expression and puts his soul into the effort to speak to us through his music the deep thoughts and hopes that stir within him. We can listen for hours to the player who is bleeding for us, who is pouring into their playing all his power, all his passion, so that you and I may get a glimpse of the truth as he sees. A painter sees some great law of beauty or color in a bit of landscape, and with all the passion of his art he transfers that bit of landscape to the canvas for you and me to appreciate. He comes upon some person in who he sees some ruling passion, that colors and livens the whole soul, and he puts that face onto canvas that we may see the Divine in commonplace. Cecilia Beaux,⁴ as she paints her portraits, has someone read to her some story or some beautiful passage of literature that stirs her soul to its depths,

⁴ Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942), American portrait Artist.

and in the midst of her sympathetic tears, she sees the face that she is painting as the expression of those great thoughts that are sweeping through her mind like the waves of a mighty sea. It is because she can see the greatness of the thoughts in her own life that she is able to see them in others, and give to others of her own greatness. No, only those who have justly appreciated the duties and obligations that they owe to themselves, can enter into the secrets of your life and mind, and minister unto our needs. They must bleed for us, or they cannot help us. To minister unto others, to serve them, to make them see with great ruling passion the beauty and glory of living, we must first see it ourselves and give ourselves up to it.

We do not have to wait until a certain standard of preparation has been attained before we give ourselves up to the life of service. We are so made that each one of us has something that is of value to others, some individual characteristic that distinguishes each individual from every other being in the world. The bit of his individuality is his {???} of fitness to become of service to the world in some capacity. What teacher has not at times felt himself the pupil as the pupil suddenly is transformed into the teacher as he has opportunity to display that power that is his. But in truth each one has his limitations as well, and feels the need of help, and instruction from others. So, as a matter of fact, as soon as we are, we are teachers, and pupils at the same time. As soon as we are able to realize this, we are in a fair way to appreciate that great teaching of Jesus. One never comes to a full appreciation of his own power until he is called upon to exercise it, and in exercising it he finds it expanding, and developing. The more the musician gives of his power, the more he has. The less he gives, the less he has. The more a reformer gives of that spirit within him that makes him a reformer, the more he has left to give. As he refuses to give, he loses that with he already had. Is not that the meaning of the parable of the talents. The man who put his talents out to service, finds that they double in value. He who refuses to put them to service finds that in due time they not only do not increase, but they actually become less and less until the talent has entirely disappeared, and the man stands before the world a complainer and a pessimist. There is a law of physics that says to each and every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. The very force that drives the bullet from the rifle also drives the rifle back in the opposite

direction from which the bullet goes, and with equal force. The distance which the two bodies travel will depend upon the ratio of the weight of the bullet to the weight of the gun. The same is true in our intellectual life. The teacher learns as much as the pupil. The very effort that he makes to impart his knowledge to others, reacts upon himself, and clarifies and fixes more firmly that which he would teach. Any service of goodness, or love done for another records itself upon the soul of the doer, as quickly and as accurately as comes the recoil of the rifle. That is a very dramatic and impressive expression of this idea in the character of Madam Defarge in Dickens' Tale of Two Cities.⁵ Madam Defarge sits quietly behind the counter in the wine shop, and knits, knits, always knitting the record of conversation and events that take place in that little hidden out-of-the-way place in Paris. When the day comes and {???} Guillotine sits in judgement upon the victims of the Revolution, Madame Defarge unravelling, unravelling, and the unerring records of her testimony doom man after man to death. Each act, good or bad, each thought, pure or impure, each hope, selfish or unselfish, is recorded on one's own soul, and helps to make the sum total of what we are today, and fits us with the power with which we face tomorrow. This unerring law of action is forever at work. If the deed, the thought, the impulse is one of unselfish interest in another, not only is the other benefitted, but the Father who seeth in secret, will recompense this, but if the deed be mean, selfish and cruel, we will also be recompensed with a great accuracy.

Whosoever would save his life must take his talent, be it one, 2, 5 or 1000, and with that talent with which he has been endowed to serve the world, he must turn away from himself, and put his whole heart and soul into the mission of making others see that which makes life sacred to him. It may be in one capacity or it may be in another, but to that duty he is called, and to it he must respond if he wishes to find life rich and satisfying. If life seems commonplace and uninteresting, if time hangs heavy on your hands, if the world seems too bad to live in, and your own powers are not properly understood, let us turn away from those thoughts, rise above yourself and put your talent to use in the world, and behold the time will seem too short to do the things that we need to do, and we shall find in

⁵ Charles Dickens (1812-1870) published A Tale of Two Cities in 1859.

the world not the sin, and the wickedness that we thought was overwhelming us, but we will find goodness in every life, and the divine powers of everyone waiting for us to minister unto them, and show them the passion of our life, as the hungry audience hangs on the words of an active man like Booker Washington, or Jacob Riis, and absorbs something of the spirit of life that they have not but feel the need of. Not with less force does this same apply to this church. We have the talent, not one or two, or five, but a thousand, and the need that the world feels for our talent is so apparent, so forced home upon us by the despairing tone that characterized the churches that are in retreat before the rapid progress of the principles of Free Inquiry and individual authority, calls us to a service as noble as ever institutions had the opportunity of doing. I read an editorial this week in a denominational paper which said that the generation of young men and women that are growing into power now, are without any religious training or thoughts. They are indeed without the faith of a former day. But there are already within their minds the germs of a stronger deeper simpler faith, that shall make them servants and laborers in an age of deeper spiritual force than the world has yet seen. To that service we are called to show to those who are groping after light amid the ruins of history, the light which has shown, and is shinning now with unequalled splendor in the midst of living active growing present. We have our talent. The world needs us. So let us forget ourselves, and turn to the needs of the world, and as we serve the world and bring light to them, they also will respond and bring light to us. Though we seem to lose our life for their sake, we shall find it in them riches and more beautiful and ever-growing and expanding. No greater truth of life has ever been spoken than this of Jesus, "For whosoever would save his life shall lose, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."