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1906

**Broken Ideals and Discourages Worshippers [String-Bound  
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Earl Clement Davis

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Broken Idols + Discouraged  
worshippers.

If anyone should take the trouble to point out to people to day the extent to which they are worshippers of idols, and in their blind worship bring themselves to sorrow and discouragement as their idols be broken and destroyed before them, he would hardly be thanked for his pains. Indeed it would be regarded as little short of blasphemy to suggest that in a christian nation such a thing is the worship of idols could survive yet I think that in spite of all assertions to the contrary we are quite well & happily involved in a system

of idol worship, that is bringing<sup>2</sup>  
up us daily the depression and  
ferociousness, that follows the  
downfall ~~and~~ of the particular  
idol, that happen to claim our  
allegiance. In fact we have  
witnessed the destruction of many  
idols during the past few years,  
and at each calamity, their tor-  
ture the very <sup>or</sup> form of the same  
feelings, and expression the same  
ideas as were felt and thought  
when the waddled populace  
cried out "Great is Diana of  
the Ephesians."

When we use the word idolatry  
these immediately arises before  
us in mind, the ~~vision~~ picture  
of some wooden god made

in human form, or some <sup>3</sup> tree,  
or some golden calf,  
or some Grecian household Pevots,  
or some Roman Emperors wings.  
But we forget that such forms of  
idolatry are ~~to~~ but particular forms  
of a tendency that is ~~was~~ ~~was~~ ~~was~~  
universal in human nature.

It is the vice of a great virtue.  
It is not confined to foreign peoples,  
and to ancient times, but here  
and there, and then and now  
it takes its place in ~~our~~ life, and  
by in its ~~own~~ own peculiar way  
demands its homage and its obedience.

The pity of it is we do not realize  
that we have become idol worshippers  
until some sad day we find  
our idol rotted, and lying in  
rubbish at our feet, and we have

to a sudden consciousness of  
 our flight, as we sit downcast  
 and discouraged amid the ruins  
 of the false god <sup>to</sup> whom we have  
 sold our birthright for a mess of  
 pottage.

~~That~~. The method by which we  
 permit ourselves to become idol  
 worshippers is very natural  
 very human, and indeed divine.  
 and so long as the idol that we  
 worship ~~claims~~ retains its place  
 of absoluteness in our lives, and  
 we doubt or suspicious of the  
 possibility of its falsehood finds  
 its way into our mind, no one  
 is ever fully ever satisfied  
 with all things, including the  
 idol. Thus he who thus worships.

No one can be more happy than (5)  
the heathen as he sits in worship  
before his idol, in whom he has  
faith that all power, all goodness  
all love are incarnated. No  
one can be more happy than the  
follower of Mahomet, so long  
as he has faith that that  
through the prophet Mahomet  
he has found the one way  
to Allah, the one God. No one  
can feel more secure than  
the Roman Catholic so long  
as his faith remains firm  
to the idea that in the priest  
and ~~the~~ church are life.  
This is the one certain and  
irrevocable path way to

eternal peace, in which it is his  
pleasure to walk. No one can  
live with greater assurance of  
the ~~right~~ right life, than the saintly  
soul who sits day by day searching  
the ~~of~~ scriptures confident in the  
faith that this service will  
bring its sure reward in the  
world to come. The unquench-  
ing worship of Christ is filled  
with some confidence ~~of~~ born  
of his faith that on the cross  
his sins were atoned for and  
in the fellowship of Christ's elect  
he will receive the benefits  
of the great sacrifice for all  
sins and evils.

~~the a less exalted flame~~

In all this form there is <sup>17</sup>  
a diversity of manifestations  
but there is the one and the  
self same spirit, and that  
one and the self same spirit  
is the spirit of Idolatry. Strip  
away the outer garments of  
these various cults from the  
worshipped ~~of~~ the graven  
image, to the worshipped of  
the engraved image, and  
beneath will be found the  
~~spirit~~ ~~gives~~ impulse giving  
life to all. It is idolatry.

To give a fictitious value to  
a thing, or a person, or the  
graven or mental image  
of a thing or a person, and



to pay it honor and respect 78  
and even to worship it for  
that value which it has not  
intrinsically, that is idolatry.  
It is the fundamental error  
of human life, the basis of  
the formal worship of idols, and  
the basis of sinners every day  
idolatry in all its forms from  
the lowest to the highest.

Every object, every person, every  
institution has its own proper  
place, its true relationship with  
other persons and objects in a  
world in which every thing  
is related to every other. Do  
single out one of these things,  
or one of these persons, or one  
of these institutions, and

accord to it a worth and a value  
with which it is not intrin-  
sically endowed, and honor  
respect and pay tribute to it  
on the basis of its position  
valuation, that is the essence  
of idolatry, ~~It is untruthful-  
ness.~~ The idol may have some  
value for its worth for the material  
it contains, it may have some  
artistic merit for its symbol  
of the expression of the artist's  
personality, it may have some  
inspirational value by virtue  
of its associations, and as a  
symbol of its followers' ideals,  
but to general regard it has  
as ~~containing the~~ having the  
form of a God, or as being  
the medium for a God to

work miracles in a fervorism<sup>10</sup>  
of the truth not only of facts,  
but of the imagination. The  
thing is the product of man's  
mind working on the raw  
material of things, and it's power  
stop there.

Out of the fervorism of an  
exceptionally noble man, first  
the fictitious magaries of speculation,  
the idol of christ has been  
manufactured, and to that  
imaginary being love and  
worship has been paid for centuries.  
But it still remains true when the  
fiction has been stripped away from  
the fact.

Now all these various idols to  
which men have paid homage

and to which they are now paying<sup>11</sup>  
harmage are in every way as  
good as a reality, so long as the  
illusion in which they are shrouded  
remains undisclosed. The ivory  
wove answers all purposes of  
the worshipping Oriental, so long  
as the blind and implicit faith  
in the omnifotence, and loving  
Kirchen of the God remains  
unclouded by any question of  
the inquiring spirit. The potent  
medicine in the bottle on the  
shelf is just as good as anything  
else, so long as there is no  
need of medicine, and it  
remains untouched. The paper  
money without coin value  
behind it is just as good

as a medium of exchange as <sup>(12)</sup>  
anything else so long  
as no one ~~has~~ takes the trouble  
to ask how much the stuff is  
really worth, and who is  
responsible for its redemption.  
The watered stock of a corporation  
will for its face value  
until some ~~one~~ inquisitive  
person begins to find out that  
the million dollar worth of  
stock is ~~not~~ actually repre-  
sents only about 10000 dollars  
worth of property. Any religious  
system will float all the  
watered stock of speculation  
needed, and dogma that the  
mind of man can invent

so long as faith in the value of its totality remains unchanged.

But you not only imagines and constructs, he inquires and investigates, He knocks at the door of things unknown, having faith that he will have it opened unto he. He seeks, confident, that he will find, he asks in the faith that he will receive. He is endowed with the impulse of the inquiring spirit, and he will not remain satisfied until he has examined the idol of ivory, to see if it has its alleged powers, and the patent medicine to see if it can cure, and the fofes wovey to see if it has any real worth behind it; the wotred stork does not escape his notice, nor does he fall over the

(19)

shabby claims of a religious system.  
The big stick will not always work,  
and by use people become so accus-  
tomed to it that they are bold to in-  
vestigate.

Then comes the rail catastrophically  
of colosse. The idol which once  
we worshipped for a volume which  
we never a part of it, is now cast  
aside, and even that volume which  
belongs to it is overlooked and  
trampled ruthlessly. By the dis-  
couraged, and disenchanting  
of place. The paper money once  
passing for its face value, falls,  
falls, falls in fire; constitution  
reigns; and at last the bad work  
of absolute worthlessness is  
the terra firma upon which

the imploding airship ~~comes~~  
~~to~~ falls. The ~~watered~~ stock the  
 value of the watered stock is  
 doubled. Down goes the price,  
 carrying in its ~~own~~ fall, financial  
 ruin and loss, stagnation of in-  
 dustry, ruin, hardship, and  
 suffering.

The claims to religious truth, and  
 religious authority are doubted. Shrewdly  
 and steadily the inquiring mind  
 and the hungry spirit becomes  
 awakened. By what authority do  
 you speak? In what power do you  
 act" asks the world. <sup>Century by Century</sup> ~~from~~ year  
 for two centuries, we see the  
~~same~~ constant and steady in-  
 vestigations into the <sup>authority</sup> ~~truths~~ and  
 claims of the church or the ministry



of religion. The altar another of <sup>16</sup>  
the sacred sofer, ~~and holy~~ has  
been opened, and nothing has  
been found within, like unto  
the representations printed on the  
outside. As a result of this  
shattering of an idol worshipped  
for a power which it does not  
contain, we are in the midst  
of the gloomy situation of a  
nation clinging frantically  
to the crumbling bits of  
their ~~fallen~~ dethroned God idol,  
as she in despair they are throwing  
the fragments of their ~~fallen~~  
colloping crystal facade away  
and forgetting the foundation  
upon which it was built

and the true worth of the same (17)  
material involved in its construction.  
France for centuries a century living in  
the moral gloom following its discom-  
agement and the ruins of its  
religious idol, whose falsities had  
been disclosed: Germany entering  
upon the same kind of a period,  
stately and stately in the  
might of it, Russia just com-  
ing to it; and the people of this  
passing through all the stages of  
it: that is the price we are  
paying at present for worshipping  
a religious idol of speculation,  
and having to go through the pain  
of disillusionment.

The basis of life is truth, and  
to follow the splendour of fictions  
in the idolatrous worship of  
their fictitious values, is but to

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bring upon ourselves the gloom of  
living amid broken idols, in the  
atmosphere of discouragement  
and despair, - a just fervor for  
fixing upon things, and persons,  
and institutions a false value, and  
a false claim.

But I am speaking of this great  
and universal danger of false  
valuation, and self-deceit, not  
merely because it happens that  
we are living at a time, when  
many doubting ones are  
crying with the cry of the shaming  
discouragement, "Great is Diana  
of the Ephesians" as the convulsion  
by clinging to their <sup>folks</sup> idols, though which  
they derive much gain; not  
indeed because we are living at  
a time when inquiring, and

asking for the true value, and 219  
power of everything, from the  
individual man, to the great  
institutions, but I am speaking of  
it because of its direct bearing  
upon individual lives, and the  
flexibilities, and problems which  
they have to face. Each one of  
~~us has to~~. Each one of us is  
living in the midst of warring and  
conflicting duties, obligations,  
and privileges. The danger of  
life is to permit some one of  
these privileges, or duties, or  
problems, to assume before our  
very eyes a false value, for which  
~~it has no real~~ is greater than  
its intrinsic worth. We transform  
some privilege, or some duty, or  
some obligation into an idol.

(20)

and worship the idol in the days  
of our blind faith, preparing the way  
for a discouraged pessimism, when  
in time of actual need, the limitations  
of our idols' power are disclosed to  
us, and we see it for its true worth.

So speak <sup>first</sup> of some of the more common  
things of life wherein idolatry is  
common, and the danger is apparent.  
we turn naturally to what we  
commonly call pleasures, i.e. those  
things that we do for no other reason  
than the enjoyment of them at the  
time, and their influence upon pleasure  
later. ordinary sports and games,  
out of doors and indoors, ~~the~~ the enjoyment  
of the appetites, are the more common  
forms of pleasure seeking.

In the child this is the dominant  
factor, and must continue to  
be a part of the life of everyone  
ever to the end. So relax, to enjoy

to forget everything for a time in (2)  
the mere joy of bodily exercise, and  
healthy pleasure. This is one of the  
great virtues of life, and becomes  
a social and individual duty.  
Taken for its real worth, and estimated  
at its real value, pleasure, and  
the enjoyment of pleasure is a  
cardinal virtue in life.

But when it is given a false value,  
when it becomes as a faracee,  
a potent medicine, to be used as  
food, and drink, and all else,  
it has taken on the coat of  
false valuation. and the man  
who is simply a pleasure seeker  
in this sense, is worshipping  
one of the worst, repulsive, and  
~~the~~ blood thirsty idols that man  
ever worshipped. He is preparing  
for the day when the true value of

his idol will be disclosed to him <sup>(22)</sup>  
and broken in body, crippled in  
mind, dwarfed in spirit, he  
will sit along amid the crumbling  
fragments of his broken idol, wound-  
ed only by the chanced bones, and  
lifeless as the sacrifices he  
had made to ~~his~~ upon the altar of  
his false god.

Pleasure in truth is good and  
essential, Pleasure in idolatry  
is destructive, and swoothering.

It time to the question of money and  
money making, or wealth. He ~~is~~  
~~imagines, there is more~~. He who would  
deny the value, and even the necessity  
of a moderate amount of money; and  
the <sup>satisfaction</sup> desire of a comfortable reserve  
fund, is simply dealing in cant  
and rant. Money is good. It  
will purchase food, land, books

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travellers, with it one can travel,  
or give aid to the poor, and do a  
thousand and one things that are  
desireable, and good in human life.  
So far so good. But there are some  
things that money will not do,  
It will purchase food, but not health,  
" " purchase love, " not a home,  
" " hire ~~friends~~ <sup>help</sup> " will not  
make friends: It may purchase  
books, but not an education, it  
may buy love stories and poems  
but it cannot buy love, it may  
purchase popularity, but it cannot  
secure love, it may build a church,  
but it cannot build the Kingdom of  
God. Money in its true worth is good  
and desirable, but money worshipped  
as an idol enveloped with false  
values brings only ruin, misery  
and despair. Witness the men



and the women to cry whose lying  
 in disgrace, shame, and despair  
 among the ruins of their broken  
 idol, the magnitude of whose power  
 has been disclosed to them in  
 the hour when real power and  
 strength.

As to the another popular idol, that  
 of knowledge, and culture. The ~~true~~  
 good, the power of knowledge, and  
 culture is too witnessed by every  
 man that we know, hence it is possible  
 to get it by speculation, or to inherit  
 from scholarly ancestors, it is  
 very probable that we should place  
 a higher value upon it, than we  
 do to-day. Yet to ~~be~~ familiar  
 with even one of the great  
 branches of human knowledge,  
 to be at home in the discussion  
 of history, art, literature, science

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to be acquainted with the acts  
of facts of fine arts, and to listen  
appreciatively to the opera is by no  
means a final standard of  
human life. Knowledge <sup>of culture</sup> in truth  
is deep, rich, and forceful in its  
significance, but knowledge and  
culture, embodied unaltered in  
a fictitious form, and worshipped  
in idleness, brings one to the same  
discouraging, desperate end  
that is in store for every worshipper  
of idols. In the moment when the  
supreme need is felt, and the  
great cure all is brought forth,  
it is found wanting. We are  
laid low by the spectacle of

our idol, stripped of its fictitious  
adornments, and we are dis-  
couraged by the true power of that  
which we thought we all fever-  
ed.

It is in favour there is the same  
power change. ~~I think these are~~  
~~men.~~ To give a gift, and true  
estimate of a person, either dead  
or living, is right and good. To  
pay special honor to those who have  
done special service is just: to  
be influenced by the personality of  
the great and good is wise and  
it is uplifting. But because  
a man is divine, and his  
evidence of his divinity is by  
no means the just basis of

declaring him to be God; and  
 accord him the worship of the  
 supreme being. Because our  
 ancestors were strong brave  
 men, who did a noble work,  
 and lived heroic lives, we of  
 right should respect them, but  
 to regard them as saints, and  
 worship them as such, is but  
 to erect another idol to be  
 demolished before our eyes, at  
 some critical moment. Because  
 our friend is good noble, and  
 true, there is no just reason  
 for paying him the worship  
 that belongs to ~~the~~ God,  
 much better would we show

our respect and affection by turn-  
 ing some of our ~~reflections~~  
 adoration for him, towards the  
 less lovely, less noble, and give  
 them the inspiration they need.

The truth of human life is wonder-  
 ful enough, without attempting  
 to envelope it with a fictitious  
 value, and credit it with  
 an assertion of perfection. To turn  
 our love and respect for humanity  
 in an idolatrous worship is but  
 to bring the catastrophe upon us  
 which is told in the fable  
 of the fall of man. Fictitious values  
 are never permanent, and the  
 disclosure of their falsity, either  
 in the dead or the living, in other  
 or our selves, is the shattering of  
 a broken idol, and to shatter

an idol brings us despair and  
discouragement because in  
worshipping the idol, we were  
relying upon a false form.

It is the way of life, the way of  
nobility, the divine way, is not  
in the worship of things, or  
persons, or institutions, about whom  
a false light has been cast,  
and to whom a false power has  
been accorded, ~~but the~~ not  
it is not the worship of idols,  
which must be shattered before  
our eyes because of their falsity,  
but it is in the worship of ideals,  
~~and~~ through which the great  
good will of the universe  
is revealing himself to us.

The true way of life is in foying  
a true and just respect and  
love to those powers of our femou-  
ality, those things of the world  
those femours of the fast and present  
those <sup>the</sup> institutions of society, in  
whom the ideals have found some-  
what of expression, and holding  
them ever in readiness to do  
service in the realization of  
the ideals in human life. Those  
that to keep them ever active  
in the work of this great world  
of becoming in which we  
are fellow-workers with infinite  
In that work, in that life, there  
is pain, and suffering and

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hardship to be sure, along with  
the joy the pleasure, and the  
suffering, but in that work,  
in the world of ~~ideals~~ there is no  
discouragement, no defeat,  
but triumph, and eternal life  
and faith, and the peace  
of that foreth all understanding



## Broken Idols and Discouraged Worshippers

Earl C. Davis

Pittsfield, MA

1906

If one should take the trouble to point out to people today the extent to which they are worshippers of idols, and in their blind worship bring themselves to sorrow and discouragement as their idols lie broken and destroyed before them, he would hardly be thanked for his pains. Indeed it would be regarded as little short of blasphemy to suggest that in a Christian nation such a thing as the worship of idols could survive. Yet I think that in spite of all assertions to the contrary we are quite well involved in a system of idol worship, that is bringing upon us daily the depression and pessimism that follows the downfall of the particular idol that happens to claim our allegiance. In fact, we have witnessed the destruction of many idols during the past few years, and at each catastrophe there has risen the cry born of the same feelings, and expressing the same ideas as mere feelings and thoughts when the maddened populace cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."<sup>1</sup>

When we use the word idolatry there immediately arises before our mind the picture of some wooden God made in human form, or some tree, or some Golden calf or some Grecian household {???) or some Roman Emperor image. But we forget that such forms of are but particular forms of a tendency that is universal in human nature. It is the vice of a great virtue. It is not confined to pagan peoples and to ancient times, but here and there, and then and now, it takes its place in life, and in its own peculiar way, demands its homage and its obedience. The pity of it is we

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<sup>1</sup> The Roman goddess Diana (Artemis to the Greeks) was particularly important to the Ephesians, who lived in Ephesus, a Greek colony on the eastern coast of Asia Minor (Turkey today). A temple built in her honor was begun in 550 B.C.E., and took 120 years to complete. It measured 425 feet by 225 feet, almost double the size of the Parthenon in Athens.

do not realize that we have become idol worshippers until some sad day we find our idol shattered, and lying in ruins at our feet, and we come to a sudden consciousness of our plight, as we sit downcast and discouraged amid the ruins of the false god to whom we have sold our birthright for a mess of pottage.

The method by which we permit ourselves to become idol worshippers is very natural, very human, and indeed divine, and so long as the idol that we worship retains its place of absoluteness in our lives, and no doubts or suspicions of the possibility of its falseness finds its way into our mind, no one is more happy, more satisfied with all things, including the idol, than he who thus worships. No one can be more happy than the heathen as he worships before his idol, in whom he has faith that all power, all goodness, all love are incarnated. No one can be more happy than the followers of Mohamed, so long as he has faith that through the prophet Mohamed he has found the one way to Allah, the one God. No one can feel more secure than the Roman Catholic so long as his faith remains firm to the idea that in the Priest and Church and Pope, there is the one certain and irrevocable pathway to eternal peace, in which it is his pleasure to walk. No one can live with greater assurance of the right life, than the saintly soul who sits day-by-day searching the scriptures confident in the faith that this service will bring its sure reward in the world to come. The unquestioning worship of Christ is filled with [the] same confidence born of his faith that on the cross his sins were atoned for and in the fellowship of Christ's elect, he will receive the benefits of the great panacea for all sins and evils.

In all these forms there is a diversity of manifestations, but there is the one and the selfsame spirit, and that one and the selfsame spirit is the spirit of Idolatry. Strip away the outer garments of these various cults from the worshipped of the graven image, to the worshipped of the engraved image, and beneath will be found the impulse giving life to all. It is Idolatry. To give a fictitious value to a thing, or a person, or the graven or mental image of a thing or a person, and to pay it honor and respect and even to worship it for that value which it has not intrinsically, that is idolatry. It is the

fundamental error of human life, the basis of the formal worship of idols, and the basis of common everyday idolatry in all its forms, from the lowest to the highest.

Every object, every person, every institution, has its own proper place, its true relationship with other persons and objects in a world in which everything is related to every other. To single out one of these things, or one of these persons, or one of these institutions, and accord to it a worth and a value with which it is not intrinsically endowed, and honor, respect and pay tribute to it on the basis of its fictitious valuation, that is the essence of idolatry. The idol may have some value for its worth for the material it contains. It may have some artistic merit for its symbol of the expression of the artist's personality. It may have some inspirational value by virtue of its associations, and as a symbol of its followers' ideal. But to regard it as having the power of a God, as being the medium for a God to work miracles is a perversion of the truth, not only of facts, but of the imagination. The thing is the product of man's mind working on the raw material of things, and its power to stop there.

Out of the personality of an exceptionally noble man, plus the fictitious vagaries of speculation, the idol of Christ has been manufactured, and to that imaginary being honor and worship has been paid for centuries.

Now all these various idols to which men have paid homage and to which they are now paying homage, are in every way as good as a reality, so long as the illusion in which they are shrouded remains undisclosed. The ivory image answers all purposes of the worshipping Oriental, so long as the blind and implicit faith in the omnipotence, and loving kindness of the God remains unclouded by any question of the inquiring spirit. The patent medicine in the bottle on the shelf is just as good as anything else, so long as there is no need of medicine, and it remains untouched. The paper money without coin value behind it is just as good as a medium of exchange as anything else so long as no one takes the trouble to ask how much the stuff is really worth, and who is responsible for its redemption. The watered stock of a corporation will pass for its face value until some inquisitive person begins to find out that the

million dollars worth of stock actually represents only about \$10,000 dollars worth of property. Any religious system will float all the watered stock of speculative creed and dogma that the mind of man can invent, so long as faith in the value of its totality remains unchanged.

But man not only imagines and constructs, he inquires and investigates. He knocks at the door of things unknown, having faith that he will have it opened unto he. He seeks, confident, that he will find. He asks in the faith that he will receive. He is endowed with the impulse of the inquiring spirit, and he will not remain satisfied until he has examined the idol of ivory to see if it has its alleged powers, and the patent medicine to see if it can cure, and the paper money to see if it has any real worth behind it, the watered stock does not escape his notice, nor does he pass over the shabby claims of a religious system. The big stick will not always work, and by use, people become so accustomed to it that they are bold to investigate.

Then comes the sad catastrophe of collapse. The idol which was once worshipped for a value which was never a part of it, is now cast aside, and even that value which belongs to it is overlooked and trampled ruthlessly by the discouraged and disenchanting populace. The paper money once passing for its face value, falls, falls, falls in price; consternation reigns and at last the bedrock of absolute worthlessness is the terra firma upon which the collapsing airship falls. The value of the watered stock is doubled. Down goes the price, carrying it is fall, financial ruin and loss, stagnation of industry, ruin, hardship and suffering.

The claims to religious truth, and religious authority are doubted. Slowly and steadily the inquiring mind and the hungry spirit becomes awakened. "By what authority do you speak? In what power do you act?" asks the world. Century-by-century for centuries, we see the constant and steady investigations into the authority and claims of the church as the ministry of religion. One after another of the sacred safes have been opened and nothing has been found within, like unto the representations printed on the outside. As a result of this shattering of an idol worshipped for a power which it does not contain, we are in

the midst of the gloomy situation of a nation clinging frantically to the crumbling bits of their dethroned idol, or else in despair, they are throwing the fragments of their collapsing crystal palace away even forgetting the foundation upon which it was built and the true worth of the raw material involved in its construction. France for a century, living in the moral gloom following its discouragement amid the ruins of its religious idol, whose falsities had been disclosed; Germany entering upon the same kind of a period. Italy and Spain already in the midst of it. Russia just coming to it; and the people of this [country] passing through all the stages at once: that is the price we are paying at present for worshipping a religious idol of speculation, and having to go through the pain of disillusionment.

The basis of life is truth, and to follow the shadows of fictions is the idolatrous worship of their fictitious values, is but to bring upon ourselves the gloom of living amid broken idols, in the atmosphere of discouragement and despair—a just penalty for fixing upon things, and persons, and institutions a false value, and a false claim.

But I am speaking of this great and universal danger of false valuation, and self-deceit, not merely because it happens that we are living at a time when many doubting ones are crying with the cry of discouragement, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" as the convalescent cling to their falling idols through which they derive much gain. Not indeed because we are living at a time when inquiring, and asking for the true value, and power of everything, from the individual man, to the great institutions, but I am speaking of it because of its direct bearing upon individual lives, and the perplexities and problems which they have to face. Each one of us is living in the midst of worry and conflicting duties, obligations, and privileges. The danger of life is to permit some one of these privileges or duties or problems to assume before our very eyes a false value which is greater than its intrinsic worth. We transform some privilege, or some duty, or some obligation into an idol and worship the idol in the days of our blind faith, preparing the way for a discouraged pessimism, when in time of actual need, the limitations of

our idol's power are disclosed to us, and we see it for its truth worth.

To speak first of some of the more common things of life wherein idolatry is common, and the danger is apparent, we turn naturally to what we commonly call pleasures, i.e., those things that we do for no other reason than the enjoyment of them at the time, and their influence upon pleasure later. Ordinary sports and games, out of doors and indoors, the enjoyment of the appetites, are more common forms of pleasure seeking. In the child this is the dominant factor, and must continue to be a fact of the life of everyone even to the end. To relax, to play, to forget everything for a time in the mere joy of bodily exercise, and healthy pleasure, this is one of the great virtues of life, and becomes a social and individual duty. Taken for its real worth, and estimated at its real value, pleasure, and the enjoyment of pleasure, is a cardinal virtue in life.

But when it is given a false value, when it becomes as a panacea, a patent medicine, to be used as food, and drink, and all else, it has taken on the coat of false valuation, and the man who is simply a pleasure seeker in this sense is worshipping one of the most repulsive and blood-thirsty idols that man ever worshipped. He is preparing for the day when the true value of his idol will be disclosed to him and broken in body, crippled in mind, dwarfed in spirit, he will sit alone amid the crumbling fragments of his broken idol, nourished only by the charred bones and lifeless ashes of the sacrifices he has made upon the alter of his false God.

Pleasure, in truth, is good and essential. Pleasure in idolatry is destructive, and smothering.

Or turn to the question of money and money making, or wealth. He who would deny the value, and even the necessity of a moderate amount of money, and the satisfaction of a comfortable reserve fund, is simply dealing in cant and rant. Money is good. It will purchase food, land, books, houses. With it, one can travel, or give aid to the poor, and do a thousand and one things that are desirable, and good in human life. So far so good. But there are some

things that money will not do. It will purchase food, but not health. It will purchase a house, but not a home. It will give help, but will not make friends. It may purchase books, but not an education. It may buy love stories and poems, but it cannot buy love. It may purchase notoriety, but it cannot secure honor. It may build a church, but it cannot build the Kingdom of God. Money, in its true worth, is good and desirable, but money worshipped as an idol enveloped with false values brings only ruin, misery and despair. Witness the men and women today who are lying in disgrace, shame and despair among the ruins of their broken idol, the meagerness of whose power has been disclosed to them in the form where real power and strength.

Or take another popular idol, that of knowledge, and culture. The good, the power of knowledge and culture is born witness to by every turn that we make. Were it possible to get it by speculation, or to inherit from scholarly ancestors, it is very probable that we should place a higher value upon it than we do today. Yet to be familiar with even one of the great branches of human knowledge, to be at home in the discussion of history, art, literature, science, to be acquainted with the facts of fine arts, and to listen appreciatively to the opera is by no means a final standard of human life. Knowledge and culture in truth is deep, rich and powerful in its significance, but knowledge and culture enveloped in a fictitious power, and worshipped in idolatry, brings one to the same discouraging, desperate end that is in store for every worshipper of idols. In the moment when the supreme need is felt, and the great cure-all is brought forth, it is found wanting. We are laid low by the spectacles of our idol, stripped of its fictitious adornments, and we are discouraged by the true power of that which we thought was all-powerful.

Or in persons there is the same danger. To give a just and true estimate of a person, whether dead or living, is right and good. To pay special honor to those who have done special service is just; to be influenced by the personality of the great and good is wise and it is uplifting. But because man is divine, and gives evidence of his divinity, is by no means the just basis of declaring him to be God, and accord him the worship of the supreme

being. Because our ancestors were strong brave men who did a noble work, and lived heroic lives, we of right should respect them, but to regard them as saints, and worship them as such, is but to erect another idol to be demolished before our eyes, at some critical moment. Because our friend is good, noble, and true, there is no just reason for paying him the worship that belong to God. Much better would we show our respect and affection by turning some of our adoration for him towards those less lovely, less noble, and give them the inspiration they need. The truth of human life is wonderful enough without attempting to envelope it with a fictitious value, and credit it with assertions of perfection. To turn our love and respect for humanity in an idolatrous worship is but to bring the catastrophe upon us which is told in the parable of the fall of man. Fictitious values are never permanent, and the disclosure of their falsity either in the dead or the living, in others or ourselves, is the shattering of a broken idol, and to shatter an idol brings us despair and discouragement because in worshipping the idol, we were relying upon a false power.

No! The way of life, the way of nobility, the divine way, is not in the worship of things, or persons, or institutions, about whom a false light has been cast, and to whom a false power has been accorded. It is not the worship of idols which must be shattered before our eyes because of their falsity, but it is in the worship of ideals, through which the Great Good Will of the universe is revealing himself to us. The true way of life is in paying a true and just respect and honor to those powers of our personality, those things of the world, those persons of the past and present, those institutions of society, in whom the ideals have found somewhat of expression, and holding them ever in readiness to do service in the realization of the ideals in human life. More than that, to keep them ever active in the work of this great world of becoming, in which we are fellow workers with [the] infinite. In that work, in that life, there is pain, and suffering and hardship to be sure, along with the joy, the pleasure and the happiness. But in that work, in the world of ideals there is no discouragement, no despair, but boundless, and eternal hope and faith, and the peace that passeth all understanding.