

USES

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“Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Matthew 7:7.)

There are three things which constitute the fulness of God,—Divine Love, Divine Wisdom and Divine Use. In Him, these three are distinctly one. They cannot be separated except in thought, for wherever one of these attributes is, there is the trine. In thought, we can distinguish them, and say that Divine Love is the *Esse* or Being of God, Divine Wisdom the *Existere* or Form of God, and Divine Use the Operation or Activity of God. Yet, in Him, Love cannot *be* except united with Wisdom; nor can these two exist except in Use. For in Love there is the continual striving to go forth into act or expression, and this act constitutes Use; and the means, forms and forces by which Love goes forth into activity to accomplish its Uses are of Wisdom. In God, therefore, Love, Wisdom and Use are perfectly, though distinctly, one. Each one involves the other two, and cannot exist without them.

Man is made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, he also has this trine of love, wisdom and use, or soul, body and operation. But in man these three are finite and reflected images of the Divine and uncreated Trine in the Lord. In man they may be separated. There may be love without wisdom, or wisdom without love, or use without either love or wisdom. They may be gained successively. Sometimes it is love that spurs to the attainment of wisdom; again, wisdom leads to love; at times use precedes, and man performs use without much of either love or wisdom; yet finally, through the use, he gains the love and wisdom of which use is the expression.

These things are possible because man is born into a state of disorder, and is regenerated and restored to the order of heaven only by a Divine miracle. His natural is first brought into order, then his internal or understanding, and finally his inmost or will. In reality, the love is always primary, wisdom is always secondary, and use is the effect of the two united. For there must be a love within, which brings the outer life into order and usefulness; and this love cannot operate except by laws of order, which are truths, and the knowledge of which constitutes wisdom. So that while the will,—the receptacle of love,—is last regenerated, still love is first given, afterwards wisdom, and then the ability to perform uses. The infant has no wisdom, but love begins to be imparted to him through celestial angels, and stored within as the beginnings of his will. Afterward he learns truths and grows in wisdom, and finally he is fitted for a life of use.

It was because of this trine in God, and from Him in man, that our Lord spake as He did in this verse of the Sermon on the Mount: “Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Asking is of the will or love. Love rests not but is ever going forth in desire. *Seeking* is of the understanding. Love stirs the understanding to gain knowledge of the means of attaining its ends. *Knocking* is of the life. Man knocks at the door of opportunity.

When the love has gone forth into the understanding and has caused it to instruct itself and prepare itself to accomplish the love's purposes, then what is desired is opportunity to perform uses. The youth going out to make his way in the world has the love of success; he has the knowledge gained at school. Now he seeks a door which shall open at his knock, that he may enter in and find a place where his zeal for success and his knowledge may be utilized in a life of usefulness. Of what avail are the greatest zeal and the fullest store of learning without opportunity to work? Lacking opportunity to work, any life, however richly prepared by love and by education, is but a failure.

He who gives to man whatever man, from a regenerate love, asks; He who causes man to find whatever truth his understanding seeks; He will also give opportunity to the will and understanding to

go forth in a life of activity or use. The man who has a true and spiritual love of use, and who has fitted himself to perform use, will be given uses to do. He must indeed find his place. He must knock, sometimes at several doors, before he finds the right one. But if he asks of the Lord, He will continually guide him toward his own place, where the work of his hands will be the joy of his life, where he is in perfect freedom and equilibrium, the use he does being the perfect expression of the love which makes his proprium. And the Lord will bring him to that use and place as soon as the man can be fitted to fill it.

“No man is born whose work is not born with him,” is the saying. Some use of importance to mankind is calling for each man; and within each one there is an answering cry for that particular use without which he cannot altogether be happy. And the Lord continually operates, both from within and without the man, to bring him to his use, and his use to him, as soon as he is prepared to perform it. One will not lack opportunity to work, if only he will love use, and not merely the reward of use; if only he will love the truth, and follow wherever it leads. For the Lord says: “Behold, I set before you an open door, and no man can shut it.” (Rev. 3:8.) This “open door” that the Lord sets before each one is the door of opportunity,—of freedom to realize his own life and the joy of attainment. And where can this be realized but in the performance of some use which the love has desired, and for which mind and hand have been trained? Therefore, the “open door which no man can shut” is opportunity to perform uses.

And yet this opportunity is sometimes denied, in the present disorderly conditions in this world. We sometimes see men hunting for work; men anxious to work, and skillful, yet unable to find anything to do. Again, how little evidence we find that each man is called to a particular use for which he was born and trained, and in which alone he can utilize all his powers, and realize to his full measure the joy of living! On the contrary, the use one performs here seems to be largely a matter of chance. Most men take up the kind of work that soonest offers, with little thought of their innate fitness or lack of fitness for that use, and having once learned a trade or business, they move in that particular groove for the rest of their lives. They probably regard their work only as so much drudgery, done in order that they may live, and expect to find all the *joy* of life in pleasures and recreations after their work is done.

But this sad state of the world in regard to uses comes from the disorder into which the human heart and mind have been plunged by the love of self, which has supplanted the love of use. How many men seek for opportunity to be useful? How many place this before themselves as the purpose of their lives? Use is one with service. He alone seeks to do uses who loves to serve mankind. The genuine love of use is a regenerate love. It is received only from the Lord by those who approach Him directly, and put away as sins the evils which arise from love of self and the world. The merely natural man hates use. He regards work as a curse, pleasure alone as giving joy and happiness. Therefore, he does not seek for use, but avoids it; does not gladly go forth to meet his own use, but turns from it, and then is driven as a slave to perform some kind of drudgery, in order that he may have food to eat and clothes to wear. Is it any wonder that young men and women entering upon life with such a lack of all true ideals, should not find congenial fields of use open to them?

The great wonder is that the Lord can provide employment of any kind, and, for the most part, keeps all busy, when so many are averse to the performance of use except as driven to it by stern necessity. But the Lord rules over hell, as well as over heaven, and He rules the world where the forces of heaven and hell meet. And this He does largely through the use in which He places each one. But sometimes He does it by withholding for a time the opportunity to perform use, to the end that one may desire and value the opportunity to work.

The love of use makes heaven. Aversion to use makes hell. Therefore, man is lifted out of hell, and placed in heaven, by the love of performing uses to others. Use is Divine. It is the sphere of the Lord going forth from Him and surrounding Him. Use can be performed only from the Lord, and in the Lord. In the performance of use, man is in the Lord, is in the stream of Providence, and under the protection of heaven. But if he does not love use, the Lord is not in him, but the devil is; and from

within the man there is continual resistance to the current of Divine Providence, or of use, by which he is borne forward. But when the man in his heart loves use, then the Lord dwells in his heart, and from within guides the man to that use which He has designed and provided for him.

Let everyone, from his early maturity, desire to find that place where he can best serve the neighbor. Let him *ask* for it by acquiring from the Lord the unselfish love of use. Let him *seek* for it by becoming intelligent in all ways that will fit him for the performance of use. Let him *knock*, and enter by the door which the Lord presents before him, and he will find that every step of his way has been foreseen and provided, and that he has been unerringly guided to that use which it is best for him to do. Then let him enter it, and consecrate himself to it. Let him examine himself, and daily put away every love of ease, pleasure, variety, which keeps him from devoting himself, heart and soul, to his work, that his love of serving God and man in his use may grow ever stronger and purer. Let him daily seek to become more intelligent and efficient in the performance of his use, both by acquiring new knowledges and putting away past errors. For this, his work, has been given him by his Lord, that he may serve the Lord and the neighbor in it, and that, while serving them, he may gain the angelic love of use, and so become regenerate and an angel of heaven.

A man's use, therefore, whatever it be, is holy. Whether it be preaching the Gospel, teaching children, making a home, providing or distributing food and clothing, furnishing amusement and recreation—whatever it be, the Lord has given it to him. It is sacred. He who performs it as unto the Lord is fitting himself for interior uses in heaven.

Let no one think that his service to the Lord and to mankind is to be accomplished outside the uses of his calling or work. He is to serve the Lord in and by his work. If he cannot do so, his work is not given him by the Lord. It is an evil use. Let him leave it, and find an occupation in which he can be useful to others.

There are, indeed, certain uses to the community about him that one may perform beside those strictly within the lines of his calling. But the quality of the use that he performs in doing these benefactions of charity will be according to the quality of his use in his occupation. For it is in the daily work of his calling that the quality of the man is determined. Here his love is formed, and its quality established. Here his fitness for use is gained, if gained at all. It is in his daily work that he acquires skill and intelligence; that he forms habits of order and obedience to law. It is according to the spirit and intelligence with which he performs his work that he can be enlightened to see what will be useful to the community, and how it may be brought about without infringing human freedom. So that all uses outside of one's occupation derive their quality from the quality of the man in his daily work. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." (Matt. 7: 18.) Man becomes a "good tree" in his daily occupation. And it is according to the quality of that love that what he does in all the other relations of life are either good or evil.

The Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom are present in fulness in every Divine Use. There is no use so menial, or so trivial, among men, of which this is not true. The love of use takes away drudgery, and glorifies the meanest task. The possibilities and the joys of uninteresting labor open as the eye is enlightened by the love of use. And it is in such work especially that we may rid ourselves of selfishness and love of ease, and so gain the love of use. Everyone loves the pleasant part of labor, the easy tasks, and those that accomplish great things. But he who truly loves use loves also the drudgery of his work. He learns to put all his love and all his wisdom into the hard, dry uninteresting details of his occupation. Then only does he become a master of his trade, and what was drudgery become art.

The love of use is not gained until one has such a love of his work as this. And it is in and by this drudgery, done from conscience as duty, that we gain love of our use. This is why it was said that the Divine Love and Divine Wisdom are as fully in the most menial tasks as in the noblest. The menial uses are the most ultimate, and all fulness of interior things is in ultimates.

Man must begin at the bottom. He cannot begin at the top. If he does not find the Lord in the lowest uses given him to do, he will not find Him in the higher and pleasanter ones. But when a firm

foundation has been laid in the love of whatever drudgery is necessary to fit man for his work, and to accomplish it thoroughly, then only can he enter into a spiritual love of his use. For in learning to love drudgery, he has put away the loves proper to the natural man, and has gained the unselfish love of serving others, or of performing uses from the love of use.

Use, regarded in itself, is Divine. God alone performs uses. But He performs them through men and angels, as they fit themselves to be instruments of use. Man fits himself for Divine Us by receiving the Divine Love into his heart and the Divine Wisdom into his understanding. Then the Lord enters and dwells within, to the extent that man performs uses from and according to the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom. For love and wisdom are only ideal things without use. In use, they have their dwelling-place. Without use, love and wisdom are only figments of reason, having no reality; but in use, they abide and become actual. Therefore, it is in use, from use, and according to use that man is regenerated. In uses of life alone does man receive love; in uses alone does he receive wisdom.

He who knows, understands, and is intelligent, but does not, by a life of the love of use, enter into the interior things within the goods and truths of heaven and the church, is like one who stands without the door of the temple of wisdom. But he who gains the angelic love of use is like one who knocks at the door of the temple, and entering, finds that he has entered heaven itself. Amen.

Lessons: Zechariah 2. Matthew 7: 15-29. Divine Love XV, or H.H. 393.