

THE ISSUES OF LIFE

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The issues of life by Elwood Worcester

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ELWOOD WORCESTER

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BY

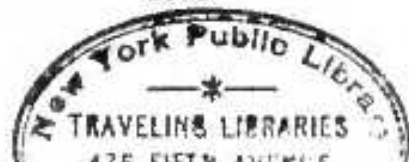
ELWOOD WORCESTER

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"THE LIVING WORD," "RELIGION AND MEDICINE,"
ETC., ETC.

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1915





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Dedication:

TO

ALFRED WORCESTER
OF WALTHAM

WHO HAS REALIZED ONE OF BALZAC'S
NOBLEST DREAMS IN PROVING WHAT
CAN BE DONE FOR THE REDEMPTION
OF MAN BY A COUNTRY DOCTOR

1924

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INTRODUCTION

THE general purpose and scope of this volume are contained in its title—The Issues of Life. In it I have tried once more to apply the principles of the Christian Religion to the physical, moral and spiritual needs of men. The Religion of Christ was given once for all, but its interpretation in the light of contemporary knowledge and its application to our spiritual life is a task which each generation must perform for itself, the accomplishment of which determines in great degree the moral power of the generations as they pass. In the Christian Religion we possess an unending source of social progress and of spiritual development, but it is plain to any man who knows life that we are not

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deriving from our religion the help that it is able to give us. To fancy therefore that we have outgrown and exhausted Christ is a vain imagination, especially if we compare His sanity and His gigantic moral strength with the bloodthirsty or the puerile substitutes proposed by men who have rejected His counsels of love and service. As a matter of fact it is impossible for the best intellect among us to draw the faint shadowy outline of the religious teacher who should be able to succeed Him. Later and wiser generations of men will read our estimates of Christianity with a smile, and if we are still capable of blushing we shall blush for them. The present condition of the world, far from disproving the truth of Christianity, only shows how fearful is the penalty we pay for contemning it. It is not by departing from Jesus Christ but by

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drawing nearer to Him, by touching Him and letting Him touch us, that we shall find deliverance and salvation.

But this contact with Him can be established only in the domain of the will. It is only by accepting His tasks and uniting our will to His that we become His disciples. On no other ground will He accept us and here, on His own chosen ground, He will ever remain supreme and incomparable. Jesus laid down no system of dogmas. He did not demand intellectual assent and He promised nothing to those who so agreed with Him. He judged men by a different standard, as they willed or willed not to do the will of God. It is in this sphere of volition, of faith, love, sacrifice and service, that we meet Him and are acknowledged by Him. This is one of the underlying conceptions of this book.

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Another purpose I have had in mind is to show the effect of faith, peace and inward unity on our moral and physical health and on our effectiveness in all the relations of life. This is a subject which experience enables me to describe with some exactness and authority. Innumerable men are better able than I am to depict the ideal aspects of religion, but not many men have had richer opportunities to judge of its practical effect in the renewal of life, and I beg the reader to believe that in describing these phenomena I am not writing of that which I do not know. The work undertaken by us nine years ago has gone on without cessation ever since, deepening and expanding, of late years, happily, silently and without publicity. It was God, I believe, who called us to it and who has sustained us in it. For nine years a steady procession of