



BLESS AND CURSE NOT

by

Ernest Holmes

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There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." How true. For where a candle is lighted there is no darkness. This is exactly what we all wish to do. We are trying to light a candle, to use the faith, the hope and the conviction that is within us in such a way that we shall get along better in life, that we shall enjoy more friendship and happier situations and that in turn we shall give out more.

We are certain that back of everything and running through everything, there is a Law of Good which we can use and a Principle of Life that we can apply to everything we do. We have come to the conclusion that there are certain definite laws of mind which, rightly used, will carry us to success, to happiness and wholeness, but which wrongly used, will stop the flow of life through us and block the flow of everything that is good. And we have come to the conclusion that the Power of good conspired with us when we use it with love.

Love really is the great motivating power of life. Love, combined with faith, is the most dynamic thing on earth. Therefore, anything that blocks the flow of love, blocks the flow of life. Whoever it was who said that we should bless and curse not, knew what he was talking about.

I remember a certain man who told me that he was having difficulty in getting along with people. He was an actor and a good one, but he could never seem to get along with his directors or producers or those who worked with him. They were always at loose ends.

I felt his real trouble lay deep within himself but he didn't know this. It would have been unkind and useless to tell him that he was the one who was obstructing right relationships. He wouldn't have believed this. And so I began by explaining to him that there is only one Life, which is God. This was easy for him to understand. I explained that his fine creative ability, as an actor was that he could feel the way other people thought. He could enter into the characters and personalities of other people and reproduce them at will - for this is the essence of all great acting.

He understood this well enough, but he didn't know that back of it all there is but one Power. He hadn't come to see that everyone with whom he was associated was rooted deep in the same life. Somewhere in his life he had received such a sense of rejection of not being wanted and needed and loved, that his whole reaction to life was one of self-defense, as though he were trying to get even with life.

As we talked together this idea of the reality of the one Presence in everyone gradually came to him. And then the day came when I was able to tell him that if he would meet the God in others then the God in others would respond to him.

Finally the whole thing dawned on him very clearly. He realized that he was actually cursing his environment. He was separating himself from his directors and his producers and those with whom he was associated through silently criticizing

everything they did. And I said to him: "You really are cursing them in your mind. Of course you don't mean to do this, but you are. Now I want you to reverse the whole process." I gave him this old Chinese fable which says that it is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. And then I said, "You are that candle."

Being an actor, of course he was able to dramatize this and because he was deeply sincere and wanted to be right, he set about to reverse his thinking. He began to bless his directors and producers.. He began silently, in his own mind, to praise everyone he was working with. And the miracle took place, as it always must when we unify with Life. They began to bless and praise him. And the very ones who had seemed to be antagonistic toward him because of his antagonism for them, seemed to put themselves out to do everything possible to help him.

Now, there are two ways we can look at this proposition. One is that it all happened by chance, and the other is that it happened in accord with certain fundamental laws which we all are using, whether we know it or not. Well, everything is governed by law, whether it be the circles of the planets in their courses or the everyday events in your life and mine. Nothing happens by chance.

Perhaps we haven't thought that our very attitude toward the food we eat decides whether or not it is going to digest properly. Perhaps we haven't thought that when we say, "Oh, my poor head" or "My bad heart" we stop the flow of life through us. In a certain sense we are either blessing or cursing everything around us.

This principle of blessing rather than cursing applies to everything we do. I have always loved dogs and I have never met one that I couldn't get along with. For animals feel our mental attitudes toward them. They can tell who has confidence in them quicker than you and I can. And children are much the same way, for children are very subjective to their environment, they feel the thoughts around them very keenly.

You will always notice that those who get along well with children love them, they praise them in their own minds, they expect them to respond. And the family where the best discipline is maintained is not the one governed by the rod but the one governed by love and consideration for each other. You cannot beat badness out of a child; you cannot whip a dog into caring for you; you cannot govern a horse by ill treating it.

We all know these things. They are so common in our experience that we accept them. But perhaps we haven't realized that this same principle, applies everywhere and to everything we are doing. It might sound strange to say to someone who isn't getting along well in life that it would be good if he were to begin to bless himself and everything he is doing. And yet, this is true and anyone can prove it to himself who applies the principle.

The secret of all this is to learn how to reverse our thinking, how to change out mental attitudes. But we must have a few basic principles to follow. And if we

follow these principles, the rest will be easy. Things will gradually shape themselves to meet our new approach to life. Basic to these principles we should follow is the thought that God is present everywhere, that there is one Life, that Life is God, that Life is my Life now. And in this thought we must include others. And I think that we ought to include our whole environment everything we do and everyone we meet.

I well remember attending a meeting of a group of people who were discussing certain problems and a propositions quite heatedly. There was a lot of antagonism and resentment among them and a complete lack of understanding and cooperation. As a matter of fact, I was getting quite upset myself, until I thought, well after all, I am one of those present and if I have permitted myself to get caught in all this confusion it is because I am not quite right inside myself. So I began to affirm that there is only one Presence, one Power and one Law of Good that we all live in this Presence, we are all governed by this Law. There is only one Life, which is the life of each one of us. Therefore, whatever is good and right and just, whatever will work out well, whatever is constructive and worthwhile, is the only thing that has a right to take place. There is no resentment, no antagonism, no resistance, no disagreement because God is over all, in all and through all. It happened all right, as it always does. A complete, agreement was reached and in a friendly manner.

But sometimes we don't do this and drift along with the antagonisms and resistances and resentments and when we do this we become a part of them and we can no longer heal such a situation because all we are doing is to add more confusion to that which is already confused. When we meet up with a thought of trouble we don't always take the time to get quiet within ourselves and readjust everything in our own thinking and really fall back to that which blesses and never curses, to that which unifies and never disrupts.

This practical application is so simple that it is hard to believe that just by reversing our thinking about a situation we can change that situation by just changing our thought about others we make it possible for them to think right about us. It is difficult at times to meet antagonism with love but this is exactly what we must do always remember that deep within everyone and everything is the one Life, the one Presence and the one Power.

But before we can get to the place where things in our lives are controlled rightly and constructively, we must first reach the place where we ourselves, are adjusted to this Law. And so the problem comes right back home to roost and we ought to be very thankful for this, because if our problems were altogether outside us we couldn't handle them.

No you don't whip the child into submission, you don't beat the evil out of him. You love the child into agreement and cooperate with him until he cooperates with you. And you don't beat life into submission either, and you don't control others by dominating them, and you don't win your way in the world through antagonism. It is indeed better to light one candle than it is to curse the darkness. It is only when we let the candle shine that the darkness is dissolved. You see, the darkness has

no power over the light but the light does have power over the darkness. Hate has no power over love but love can dissipate hate. Fear cannot destroy faith, but faith can annihilate fear.

And what are we going to find that is big enough to cover all our mistakes, powerful enough to dissolve all our difficulties and constructive enough to set us safe and sane and happy on the pathway to freedom and joy in living? We need not hesitate to say that nothing can do this, nothing is big enough to do it other than its knowledge that there is a Law of Good greater than we are that we can use.

But it is not enough merely to accept these great Truths. We have to apply them. Let us then learn to light the candle of faith in our own soul and let it shine, not peering into the darkness and thinking how black it is but rather, thinking only of the light. So shall we come to live in that light. Let us learn to bless, to think kindly about others and to realize that perhaps everyone is doing just about the best he can. So shall our own lives become transformed by the all-consuming power of love. So shall our pathway be lighted by a glow from the Kingdom of Heaven.