

**PRACTICAL
PARADOXES; OR, TRUTH
IN CONTRADICTIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649678068

Practical Paradoxes; Or, Truth in Contradictions by H. Clay Trumbull

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BY
H. CLAY TRUMBULL

PHILADELPHIA
JOHN D. WATTLES & CO.

1894

PREFACE.

Lessons from one man's experiences and observations will not be of value to all. But lessons from any man's experiences and observations will be of value to some. No man stands, in his feelings and sympathies, for his entire race. But every man, in his sympathies and feelings, stands for a class.

Hence it is, that whatever truths have made a profound impression on a man in the progress of his life-course are likely to make a correspondent impression on others who are like him, if he can bring those truths with any vividness before them. And when a series of related truths have excited interest in their detached separateness, they will hardly fail to excite fresh interest in their exhibited relation to one another and to a common central truth.

The essays in this volume are an outcome of their writer's observings and experiancings in his varied life-course. They were received with interest as editorial contributions in the pages of *The Sunday School Times*, while appearing there, one by one, during a term of ten years or more; and their republication has been urged by many who desire them for preservation in a permanent form. They are now presented in a new light, in a logical order for the elucidation and emphasis of a truth which is common to them all.

The gaining of the thoughts of this volume has not been without cost to its writer. His hope is that the considering of them will not be without stimulus and profit to its readers.

H. C. T.

PHILADELPHIA,
August 14, 1889.

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I.

THE COMFORT OF CHRISTIAN PARADOXES.

The law of the Christian life is a paradox. It is made up of seeming contradictions. All its teachings are contrary to the common opinions of man. According to this law, giving is getting; scattering is gaining; holding is losing; having nothing is possessing all things; dying is living. It is he who is weak who is strong; it is he who defies danger who avoids it; it is he who loses his life who finds it. Self-interest is promoted by unselfishness; the pleasures of earth are surest to him who disregards them; happiness is found only when it is no longer sought; the clearest sight is of the invisible; things which are not, bring to naught things which are. Yet paradoxical as is the gospel rule of living, and hostile as are its teachings to

man's ordinary opinions, the propriety of its requirements and the absolute truth of its declarations are made plain to all who fairly test them in their personal experience.

A man acquires physical strength by putting forth his strength. The arm that would shrivel if unused, grows muscular and stalwart with much exercise. Money is made by its risking, not by its hoarding. Grain lives by dying. It springs up by being buried. The mind gains most by giving out, not by taking in. Telling a thing to another fixes it the firmer in one's own mind. Teaching is the chiefest help to learning. Struggling against danger is safer than shrinking from danger. A man overtaken on a plain by a blinding snow-storm would peril his life by crouching down in the hope of evading the pitiless blast, when he might save his life by rising up to trample under foot the snow as it falls.

So, also, in the higher sphere of moral action; it is by encountering evil, not by shunning it, that the Christian keeps himself