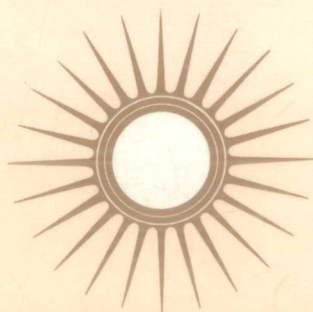


# L I G H T *from many* L A M P S



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EDITED AND WITH COMMENTARY BY  
WILLIAM EICHLER WATSON

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# LIGHT FROM MANY LAMPS

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Edited and with Commentary by  
LILLIAN EICHLER WATSON

A Fireside Book  
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Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented by fresh acquisitions, to future ages.

*Thomas Macaulay*

Nurture your mind with great thoughts.

*Benjamin Disraeli*



We forfeit the chief source of dignity and sweetness in life . . . if we do not seek converse with the greater minds that have left their vestiges on the world.

*James Martineau*



There are gems of thought that are ageless and eternal.

*Cicero*



Words are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling like dew upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.

*Lord Byron*



No man is wise enough by himself.

*Plautus*



Most of us have collections of sayings we live by. . . . Whenever words fly up at me from the printed page as I read, I intercept them instantly, knowing they are for me. I turn them over carefully in my mind and cling to them hard.

*David Grayson*



Who is a wise man? He who learns of all men.

*Talmud*



It is not how much you know about life but how you live your life that counts. Those who can avoid mistakes by observing the mistakes of others are most apt to keep free from sorrow. In a world full of uncertainties, the record of what has gone before—human experience—is as sure and reliable as anything of which we know.

*Ray Lyman Wilbur*



The men who have gone before us have taught us how to live and how to die. We are the heirs of the ages.

*Sidney Dark*





*"We are the heirs of the ages."*



The manner in which one single ray of light, one single precious hint, will clarify and energize the whole mental life of him who receives it, is among the most wonderful and heavenly of intellectual phenomena.

*Arnold Bennett*



The glow of inspiration warms us; it is a holy rapture. *Ovid*



The images of men's wits and knowledge remain in books. . . . They generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages.

*Francis Bacon*



A word spoken in due season, how good it is. *Proverbs 15:23*



Time is of no account with great thoughts. They are as fresh today as when they first passed through their authors' minds, ages ago.

*Samuel Smiles*



Who can mistake great thoughts?  
They seize upon the mind; arrest and search,  
And shake it; bow the tall soul as by wind;  
Rush over it like a river over reeds.

*Philip James Bailey*



If I can line up the people who, back through the ages, have gone at life in ways I greatly admire, then I can feel all their strength supporting me, all their standards and values pointing the way in which I am to go.

*Bonaro W. Overstreet*



# INTRODUCTION

※ ※

## I

WE WHO live today stand at the apex of a vast pyramid of human development, slowly accumulated through the many long struggling generations of the past. We are the heirs of all that has ever been accomplished, all that man has ever done to improve himself and the world in which he lives. We are the heirs of all that man has ever dreamed, thought out, fought and died for—all that he has eloquently written or expressed and left behind for the guidance of future generations.

Today when we face what is probably the greatest challenge history has ever known—today when millions of people are troubled, uncertain, and confused—the rich deposits of inspiration left by preceding generations take on a new and vital significance. There has never been a time when people were more desperately in need of faith and hope, of courage and peace of mind, of standards and ideals by which to live, and above all an abiding belief in the future and in the progress of mankind. There has never been a time when the tried and tested philosophies of the past were more urgently needed to give perspective and understanding—to give people something to cling to, something on which to build the strong, firm structure of their own lives.

But where in the staggering wealth of ideas and ideals that have come down from the past can you find exactly the help, the guidance, and the inspiration you need today? Where in the thousands upon thousands of books, papers, and records which preserve and transmit the best that man has ever written or spoken are you likely to find the words that can mean most to you now, that can have the greatest impact and influence on your daily life?

The purpose of *Light from Many Lamps* is to help meet this need. It brings the highlights of man's enormous inspirational heritage within the compass of a single volume. Here is the winnowed best of the most brilliant and constructive thinking of all times, past and present, selected to meet the needs and problems of today.

## Introduction

Here is a distillation of the greatest thoughts, ideas, and philosophies that have come down to us through the ages in an ever-widening stream of inspiration, from Aristotle to Emerson, from Plato to William James. Here is reading with a purpose, timely and provocative reading for these troubled times, guideposts to happier and more confident living—and to that inner peace and tranquillity for which so many are now searching.

## II

"Great men taken up in any way are profitable company," says Thomas Carlyle. Light from *Many Lamps* will bring you into contact with the great of every age and land, leaders in every field of human thought from ancient times to our own. You will encounter the immortals at their moments of highest inspiration. Buddha and Mohammed are here, Seneca and St. Paul, Horace and Dante. Names that will never die are here: Bacon, Goethe, Pope—Shakespeare, Voltaire—Amiel and Montaigne—Browning and Walt Whitman—all are here, the long shining caravan of the great, represented at their best.

From the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*; from the *Ethics of Aristotle* and the *Confessions of St. Augustine*; from the *Dialogues of Plato* and *Cicero's De Officiis*; from the sacred *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Upanishads*, and from the *Koran*, *Talmud*, and *Bible*—from history, literature, biography, and scripture—have come the highlights of inspiring quotation that you will find in this book.

But it is not from such classic sources alone that we have garnered the material which goes to make up *Light from Many Lamps*. Quotations from letters and diaries are here, from articles and editorials, from sermons, speeches, and even songs. Selections were not made on the basis of literary excellence or beauty of expression, but solely on the basis of inspirational impact. Readers who wonder about the varied and diverse character of the selections, who question the proximity of such intellectual titans as Plato and Aristotle with, let us say, Elbert Hubbard and Henry Ford, should bear in mind that this is not a collection of literary masterpieces, nor is it by any means intended to be. It is, as its

*name signifies, Light from Many Lamps—inspiration from many and varied sources—a treasury of great truths and enduring ideas, reflecting the whole wide range of human thought.*

We have, of course, made every effort to maintain high literary standards throughout. We have tried, wherever possible, to make our selections from among the world's most beautiful and eloquent quotations. But we have not allowed ourselves to be unduly influenced by mere language or composition, or by the aura of fame and prestige surrounding an author's name. For as Ruskin says, "The highest thoughts are those least dependent on language." When people are profoundly moved, they do not necessarily speak with the eloquence of literature. What we have searched for, rather than mere beauty, have been "thoughts that breathe and words that burn"—words that have the power to ease the heart and lift the spirit, to encourage and sustain, to give hope, faith, and consolation. We have searched for words that "knock at the gates of the soul," that have a vital message or meaning for the reader.

Here, among the old classic favorites, you will find much that has never before appeared in any anthology. Here, among the rich grains of wisdom and philosophy that have survived through the centuries, you will find quotations from the writings and speeches of outstanding men and women of our own time. Many of the quotations are from ordinary human beings who have worked out a formula for happy, successful living, or who, at the end of a lifetime of thinking and analyzing, have expressed a single eloquent thought, ageless and compelling. In fact, some of the most helpful and inspiring passages in the book have come out of great moments in otherwise unremarkable lives.

But ancient or modern, eloquent or simple, all quotations have some bearing, in some way, on the tensions, conflicts, and anxieties of life today. All help the reader meet the challenge of the times . . . and the problems of his own personal life.

### III

Samuel Johnson once said, "A man will turn over half a library to make one book." Several libraries were turned over, thousands of books and papers were searched, for the material that makes up

## Introduction

Light from Many Lamps. The search could go on endlessly, of course; sometimes words of rare inspirational value turn up in the most unexpected places . . . in the diaries of people long gone and forgotten, in old letters, moldering scrapbooks, even last wills and testaments! The research on so fascinating a subject as this could go on for a lifetime; but one must call a halt sometime, however regretfully.

Obviously no book of this kind can ever be complete; nor can it be expected to please everyone. There may be selections you do not like, or with which you do not agree. Favorite quotations of your own may be missing, or there may be some you think more inspiring than those we have included. This cannot be helped. It would naturally be impossible to include everyone's favorites, or to use only material that is to every reader's liking and every reader's taste.

"All my life I have been building up my anthology," says David Grayson in *Under My Elm*. "Whenever words fly up at me from the printed page as I read, I intercept them instantly, knowing they are for me. I turn them over carefully in my mind and cling to them hard."

Here, too, you must intercept the words that "fly up" at you from the printed page. You must intercept what is meant for you and for your particular needs. If sometimes quotations appear contradictory, bear in mind that one viewpoint may help some people—another viewpoint may help others. All quotations stem from the highest moral and ethical values, or they would not be included; and each has something to offer someone. *Light from Many Lamps* is not intended for any one special age group. There are selections to meet the needs of every age, just as there are selections to meet the needs of every mood and circumstance. It is a book of guidance and inspiration for the entire family.

## IV

*Light from Many Lamps* is not a book to read through in one or two sittings. It is a book to keep at the bedside, or on the living-room table—a book to dip into as needed, to browse in now and then, to enjoy in small stimulating portions. It is a book for the

## Introduction

hour, and for the years; a book to turn to over and over again, as to a friend; a book of moral, spiritual, and ethical guidance—an unfailing source of comfort and inspiration.

The contents of *Light from Many Lamps* "speak to your condition," as the Quakers say. You will find something here for every mood, every need. There are selections for the worried, the ailing, the bereaved—for the physically handicapped and emotionally disturbed—for those who have lost courage or faith—for those who have lost hope.

The book has been planned for readers who need specific help along certain lines, and who want it when they need it, without searching for it. Every effort has been made to arrange the material in such form that the reader can find what he needs or wants at once. Arrangement is by sections, according to subject. For example, all quotations on courage are in one section. This section is divided into chapters on the different kinds of courage: courage to rise above the trials of life, courage to accept loss or defeat, courage to meet illness or disaster, courage to face danger or death, and so on. You should be able to find what you want as easily as looking up a word in a dictionary or thesaurus.

## v

What makes this anthology different from others is the biographical data that give the origins of famous quotations, and tell what their influence has been on the lives and careers of others.

*Light from Many Lamps* is therefore not only a treasury of the world's most inspiring thoughts and ideas but a collection of brief, stimulating biographies as well. This makes for what we hope you will find interesting reading throughout.

## vi

Here, then, is a treasury of inspiration from many sources and on many subjects . . . *Light from Many Lamps*.

We have, of course, like Montaigne, made "only a nosegay of culled flowers"—though we have brought to it much of our own in the interpretive biographical material. Our sincere hope is that

## Introduction

*you will enjoy reading and using this book as much as we have enjoyed preparing it.*

*We conclude wistfully with the words of Martin Luther: "Only a little of the first fruits of wisdom, only a few fragments of the boundless heights, breadths, and depths of truth, have I been able to gather."*

Lillian Eichler Watson

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| 3. WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY: I am the master of my fate:<br>I am the captain of my soul.   | 85  |
| 4. HAROLD RUSSELL: It is not what you have lost, but what you<br>have left that counts.   | 88  |
| 5. DAVID GRAYSON: I would no longer resist and struggle; I<br>would accept the unavoidable. . . . I began to let go, to relax. . . .<br>The great reward was in the mind. . . . I felt it did not much matter<br>what happened to my body. <i>Nothing could touch me.</i> | 95  |
| 6. MARY ROBERTS RINEHART: There is nothing to fear about<br>most cases of cancer—nothing except delay!  | 100 |
| 7. ROBERT FALCON SCOTT: Good-bye. . . . I am not at all afraid<br>of the end.   | 104 |