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# Honesty

by Eugene V. Debs

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What is grander than an honest man? Who is nobler than the man who pays his debts? "Pay as you go" is a very common proverb, but it means more than men usually imagine. To run in debt with no hope of paying is as bad as highway robbery. The only difference between the man who borrows, not intending to repay, and the man who picks a pocket, is that the latter goes to the penitentiary, while the former ought to.

Owe no man anything longer than it is possible to repay! The man who pays his debts stands a better chance for heaven than the man who shouts at revivals while his washwoman is starving to death, because the devout Christian has taken the bankrupt law. Plank down the cash every time; don't say, "send in the bill." Pay your board bills, your wash bills; pay your dues at the lodge; don't be a deadbeat, always behind and always asking your creditors to "call again."

There is more genuine Christianity in one man who "pays up" than in a hundred professed Christians who subscribe to foreign missions with no intent to pay the subscription. Don't sail under false colors! It is better to be poor and not have much enjoyment than to be rich at the expense of your creditors. The man who beats a boarding house will steal the first chance he gets. A deadbeat is a thief.

Meet every obligation in life! It is better to die poor with your debts paid than to leave your heirs a fortune in your wife's name. Don't let your wife and children lose the benefits of our Brotherhood simply because you failed to pay your way! The proudest legacy you can leave your children is an honest name.

Don't allow any man to say to your children, "Your father owes me money."

The world will forgive a man many shortcomings if he will only pay his debts. If you can't afford an expense, don't indulge in it; it is better to do without than to make some creditor do without. If you make only fifty dollars a month, don't spend seventy; the twenty dollars belong to some other man. Pay as you go, be honest, and you will gain men's respect; run in debt and you will have to make friends with the constable.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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