

SIMPLE TRUTHS

Thinking Life Through
with Fulton J. Sheen



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“Do we find existence, truth, and love in their plenitude on this earth? Do we carry within ourselves the potencies to realize them in the higher degree? We possess a modicum of life, a modicum of truth, and a modicum of love, but do we possess them in their entirety?”

—*Fulton J. Sheen*

“There is a quest that calls me
In nights when I am alone,
The need to ride where the ways divide
The Known from the Unknown.
I mount what thought is near me
And soon I reach the place,
The tenuous rim where the Seen grows dim,
And the sightless hides its face.
I have ridden the wind,
I have ridden the sea,
I have ridden the moon and stars,
I have set my feet in the stirrup seat
Of a comet coursing Mars.
And everywhere
Thro’ the earth and ear
My thought speeds, lightning-shod,
It comes to a place where checking pace
It cries, ‘Beyond lies God.’”

—*Cale Young Rice*

CONTENTS

Foreword xiii

Part One: Living in Faith 1

Part Two: Living in Hope 37

Part Three: Living in Love 65

Part Four: Living in Truth 93

FOREWORD

Dost thou love life?
Then do not squander time,
for that's the stuff life is made of.

—Benjamin Franklin

When we think about our life, we often think in terms of time: the first time..., the time when..., the happy times, the sad times. We think, too, of eternity: the time to come. We realize that life is a continuum, and that this earthly life is but a fleeting moment in Time, a passageway to Life. The words of Benjamin Franklin,

therefore, echo true when we pause to reflect on life's meaning—who we are, why we are, where we are, where we are going, and how we might get there.

Such reflection is bound to yield the greatest truth of all: We are made for God; we are made to share eternity with Him. And it was that singular truth to which Fulton J. Sheen dedicated his ministry in all its forms. His was a crusade to bring souls to God, to win Heaven for all humanity, and, as was often remarked, “to reconcile the world to Christ.” Hence, his spoken and written words were offered to assist all who struggle through life, particularly when priorities are not clear—or just plain out of line.

It is difficult in this fast-paced world, amid the clamors for our attention, to find time to step back, to see things more clearly, to evaluate our

life and reassess our priorities. This small book is meant to help us do just that. Grouped under the categories of Faith, Hope, Love, and Truth, these short passages of simple wisdom speak truths that we often lose sight of, the simple truths that sustain us through life, if we but take time to ponder: truths about God's limitless power; virtue and goodness; grace and forgiveness; faith and freedom; love and loss; self and others; silence and activity; time and eternity.

Drawn primarily from Sheen's newspaper columns, as well as a few lately (re)discovered other sources, this collection of Simple Truths has been a joy to compile. The resurgent popularity of Sheen's writings attests to his giftedness in tapping the pulse of a culture and bringing Light where before there was darkness. And so, it

came as no surprise to find in these sources such a treasury of practical wisdom and directions for right Christian living that I wanted to share them with readers everywhere.

May these pages, filled with timeless Light, bring a sense of balance and purpose to all who read them. And most of all, may we hold firm on the one and only course set before us, walking the walk from the City of Man to the City of God.

PATRICIA A. KOSSMANN
LITERARY REPRESENTATIVE
THE ESTATE OF FULTON J. SHEEN

Part One



LIVING IN FAITH

“Faith is the substance
of things hoped for,
the evidence
of things not seen.”

—*Hebrews 11:1*

If anyone will look closely into the experiences of life, he will discover that God is in some way giving us a more inward sense of things, as if He would not let us become lodged in the temporal, but shove us on to what is beyond.

The eternal is with us more than we know, and even when we refuse to face it.

To those who act on what they know, more shall be revealed. Christ said: "If you do My will, you will have My Doctrine." Increase of faith will come from virtue more than from study.

Faith is related not to self-assurance, but to God; not to an event, but to truth. In fact, there is often the greatest faith when there is the least prosperity. Such was the case with Job who, full of sores and sitting on a dung hill, said: "I will trust Him though He slay me."

Faith begins at a point where there is seemingly nothing to get out of it; nor is there any indication that prosperity will follow. Faith begins with a considerable doubt about one's own goodness and power.