

## Chapter

# Seventeen

### *The Scroll Marked X*

Who is of so little faith that in a moment of great disaster or heartbreak has not called to his God? Who has not cried out when confronted with danger, death, or mystery beyond his normal experience or comprehension? From where has this deep instinct come which escapes from the mouth of all living creatures in moments of peril?

Move your hand in haste before another's eyes and his eyelids will blink. Tap another on his knee and his leg will jump. Confront another with dark horror and his mouth will say, "My God" from the same deep impulse.

My life need not be filled with religion in order for me to recognize this greatest mystery of nature. All creatures that walk the earth, including man, possess the instinct to cry for help. Why do we possess this instinct, *this gift*?

Are not our cries a form of prayer? Is it not incomprehensible in a world governed by nature's laws to give a lamb, or a mule, or a bird, or man the instinct to cry out for help lest some great mind has also provided that the cry should be heard by some superior power having the ability to hear and to answer our cry? Henceforth I will pray, but my cries for help will only be cries for guidance.

Never will I pray for the material things of the world. I am not calling to a servant to bring me food. I am not ordering an innkeeper to provide me with room. Never will I seek delivery of gold, love, good health, petty victories, fame, success, or happiness. Only for guidance will I pray, that I may be shown the way to acquire these things, and my prayer will always be answered.

The guidance I seek may come, or the guid-

ance I seek may not come, but are not both of these an answer? If a child seeks bread from his father and it is not forthcoming has not the father answered?

I will pray for guidance, and I will pray as a salesman, in this manner—

*Oh creator of all things, help me. For this day I go out into the world naked and alone, and without your hand to guide me I will wander far from the path which leads to success and happiness.*

*I ask not for gold or garments or even opportunities equal to my ability; instead, guide me so that I may acquire ability equal to my opportunities.*

*You have taught the lion and the eagle how to hunt and prosper with teeth and claw. Teach me how to hunt with words and prosper with love so that I may be a lion among men and an eagle in the market place.*

*Help me to remain humble through obstacles and failures; yet hide not from mine eyes the prize that will come with victory.*

*Assign me tasks to which others have failed; yet guide me to pluck the seeds of success from their*

## IN THE WORLD

*failures. Confront me with fears that will temper my spirit; yet endow me with courage to laugh at my misgivings.*

*Spare me sufficient days to reach my goals; yet help me to live this day as though it be my last.*

*Guide me in my words that they may bear fruit; yet silence me from gossip that none be maligned.*

*Discipline me in the habit of trying and trying again; yet show me the way to make use of the law of averages. Favor me with alertness to recognize opportunity; yet endow me with patience which will concentrate my strength.*

*Bathe me in good habits that the bad ones may drown; yet grant me compassion for weaknesses in others. Suffer me to know that all things shall pass; yet help me to count my blessings of today.*

*Expose me to hate so it not be a stranger; yet fill my cup with love to turn strangers into friends.*

*But all these things be only if thy will. I am a small and a lonely grape clutching the vine yet thou hast made me different from all others. Ver-*

*ily, there must be a special place for me. Guide me. Help me. Show me the way.*

*Let me become all you planned for me when my seed was planted and selected by you to sprout in the vineyard of the world.*

*Help this humble salesman.  
Guide me, God.*