

Lectures on Loyalty

Josiah Royce

**February 1909
The Twentieth Century Club
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

**Lecture I – The Conflict of Loyalties
Lecture II – The Art of Loyalty
Lecture III – Loyalty and Individuality**

Manuscripts in the Harvard University Archives
Call No.: HUG 1755, Box 82
Date and venue established by Mathew A. Foust
Transcription by Mathew A. Foust

The numbers included within square brackets are manuscript page numbers or emendations on the text by Mathew A. Foust.

Lecture 2 - The Art of Loyalty

The apparent conflicts between opposed loyalties, – conflicts which beset the life of the loyal, and of which at the last time I gave you examples, suggest to me, personally, one comment upon the nature of duty with which I should like to begin the present lecture. There is an old idea, deeply rooted in the minds of many of us, that the moral law is or ought to be a collection of precepts, an exhaustive collection – one adapted to all [2] possible situations, and of such a nature that, if you are confronted by a difficult situation, you have only to look into your moral code to find somewhere clearly set down just what it is that you ought to do in this particular case. Now this idea is unjust to the wealth of life. It is also unjust to the dignity of the dutiful spirit. Not all situations in life can be formulated in advance, and the moral law cannot be codified. Of course there are moral codes. But they are none of them exhaustive catalogues of maxims adapted to every possible case. The Ten Commandments represent, as everyone knows, only a few aspects of the dutiful life, and those under a form suited to a remote and in a sense primitive people. As for the [3] Sermon on the Mount, it is no code. It is far from pretending to be a collection of special maxims for all occasions. It is the embodiment of the spirit of a new life in a series of illustrative words, adapted now to this, and now to that phase of our endlessly wealthy existence. The phases in question are selected merely as illustrations of the spirit [sic] in question.

The Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians is again no code, but rather the exalted portrayal of a spiritual attitude. The dutiful spirit is indeed precisely a spirit. No letter is able exhaustively to characterize it. If it is indeed impossible adequately and finally [4] to codify even our civil and our criminal law – if each one of the codifications of such law so often attempted is soon lost to the view of all but the experts under a maze of new judicial decisions, – shall it be possible to write down a code adequate to the infinitely more subtle and delicate problems of the moral life, – of that life wherein the human spirit seeks its most novel and growing and individual expressions?

No, whoever seeks simplicity and clearness as to his duty must seek it in the form of simplicity [5] and dutifulness of spirit, not in the form of a memorized set of maxims, suitable to all individual cases that may arise. I believe, as I told you, that we do indeed vastly simplify our duty when we conceive it under the form of loyalty. I mean not a code, but first an attitude towards life, and secondly, an art of living. I tried to tell you about that attitude at the last time. When later I portrayed some of the conflicts that loyal people have to face, I introduced you to the [6] problems of the art of loyalty. Now I believe that art of loyalty to be beautifully simple in its spirit, and like all fine arts, endlessly complicated in its details. I believe that its complexity is simply due to the wealth and to the mysterious situations, sometimes beautiful, situations sometimes tragic and terrible, situations in which life daily places us. I believe that the loyal, without being in the least infallible, can be as clear and simple and reasonable in spirit in dealing with all these mysteries and with these complexities, as the consummate artists can be who somehow [7] adapt their fine art to undertakings which appear to the inexpert hopelessly

confusing. But there is one great difference between the art of loyalty and the other great arts. It is this. The art of loyalty is for everybody, however simple minded he may be, so long as he is awake to the true value of life. The plainest of souls, if only steadily faithful, can become a great artist in loyalty. For it is of the essence of loyalty to live, amid all the complications of life, with the single eye and with the love of unity and with that essential harmony of personal ideal which [8] the service of an absorbing cause inevitably gives. And I have known very simple minded folk, people of very humble station, who readily could solve such problems as we at the last time portrayed, – could solve them not always perhaps as you and I would solve them, but would solve them in such wise that the spirit of loyalty was manifest in all that they did, so that the clearest reason could only applaud their spirit, however much it might observe their fallibility.

[9] In my reasonings today I am not trying to replace the loyalty of such people by mere abstract formulations. I am trying to put with necessarily inadequate words what the genuine spirit is in which the plain minded but loyal folk try to meet such complications.

I.

Let me try to bring to your minds some of the considerations which [sic: unnecessary “which”] by which any loyal person is likely to be more or less instinctively or consciously guided when he faces any of the conflicting loyalties which at the last time we [10] exemplified. I shall express these considerations in the form of what I shall call Principles of the Art of Loyalty. The conflicts that we mentioned were, you remember, these: – First, conflicting obligations with regard to telling the truth; secondly, conflicting forms of family loyalty, such as the duty of the son to his father, considered as in conflict with the apparent loyalty than the elder brother was supposed to owe to the cause of his erring younger brother; thirdly the conflicting loyalties that romantic love often seems to bring to pass; and then, in general, the apparent conflicts of loyalty when business obligations and public duties, party and country, [11] province and nation, – and similarly, opposed social concerns, seem to make contrary demands upon a loyal man. Now I have just insisted that no conventional moral code, no mere set of rules handed down by tradition, can ever be adequate to all the complicated life problems thus suggested. Each problem is likely to be, in some respect, novel. Each case is unique. And yet I assert that the loyal spirit in dealing with such problems is something essentially simple and universal, – adequate to lead even the plainest person in the direction in which we want all men to be led. If all acted in that loyal spirit, mistakes would indeed be made, – countless mistakes; but the world would nevertheless be improving steadily in its whole moral situation.

In carrying out this view let me next insist that, whenever we have to deal with such conflicts, the first way to simplify our [12] situation, the first principle of the Art of Loyalty is this: – Let us dwell upon the loyal spirit itself, let us make clear to ourselves that whatever we are to do it must be done, not capriciously, but loyally. Our first step then, is to get into the right attitude by remembering what we who have to face these various problems most need in life. This first principle then, of the Art of Loyalty is: – Try to remember what a spirit it is in which you are trying to serve your art. Now what we most need is not a happy fortune, nor a satisfied emotional life, nor a satisfaction of our caprices, nor anything that can be defined in terms of

mere sentiment, however lofty – in brief, nothing that can belong to ourselves as mere individuals. What we need is some steadfast and life long loyalty to an absorbing cause. And this cause must be one whose service helps other people to be loyal. Our first will then in dealing with such conflicts must be the will that the conflicting loyalties, when they thus appear, shall be harmonized, shall be [13] brought into unity with one another and with the central cause of our own personal life. Often the apparent conflict of loyalties is due merely to our own flickering attention, to our forgetfulness of that will to have unity which inspires all the greatest and most effective lives. Often the mere memory, the attentive emphasizing of the ideal of unity is enough to clarify the situation. Thus the family tragedy of conflicting loyalties may be averted, in many cases simply by insisting with respect to one's family loyalty: "I am not thinking merely of father, or of mother, or of brother, nor even am I thinking of all these individuals together, nor merely of today's conflict. I am [14] concerned that the family shall be one. That to me as a member of this family is my first concern. That is my cause. That is our cause. If this or that member is pleased or petted or served, and that one snubbed or thwarted, nothing essential is so far gained unless the family is thereby made more of a whole than it was before." It is always well to see whether simply thinking of this fact together, and in the family councils, simply dwelling upon the common will to be unified in one loyal service, does not of itself go far to clear up the tangles in question. Of course the people concerned ought if possible to consider such things together. A loyal conversation (not a wrangle of individuals) goes of itself far towards ending many a conflict.

Thus, for instance, the hide and seek family, each of whose members [15] feels a conflict of loyalties because each at once distrusts the discretion and endurance of the others, and yet wishes to help the others, can get out of its comedy of errors only in case somebody says: "We *are* one; why this stupid secrecy as to what concerns all alike. [sic: "?"] Let us out with it and be done with the trouble, simply by plain mutual understanding." In such cases frankness at critical moments as to the common interest may produce the unified loyal spirit, and so solve the conflict, without in the least encouraging any tendency to nag one another henceforth about [16] the petty details or to dwell upon a past that, once loyally faced together, may well be henceforth forgotten. In much the same way, many of the apparent problems of conflicting loyalty in [sic: missing "the"] case of the lovers are due to the fact that they do not think of love as simply one of life's best opportunities to win loyalty, and to find a personal cause. If you view love as an experience, then it is often a cloying or a distracting or a terrifying experience; and for just that reason one then grows fickle, because one needs a rest from the heart pangs, or grows weary of the merely emotional sweetness. But think of love steadfastly in terms of the loyalty of active life to which it may lead, and then love helps life to its task, to its unity, [17] to its singleness of purpose. The lover who wants nothing so much as a worthy singleness of purpose in life is forewarned against essential fickleness. But the lover who habitually thinks of his love apart from active and superpersonal loyalty, may dream dreams as Shelley's lovers do in the song in Prometheus, and say, when fickleness comes:

“Ah, sister, desolation is a delicate thing.” The best way to avoid fickleness, and the conflicts of loyalty in love, is to intend from the first that if there is to be love at all, there shall be loyalty. Love is precious just because it opens a spiritual world. But the only life of that world is the loyal life.

[18] The first principle then, in dealing with the apparent conflicts of loyalty is: – Deliberately will that your cause in life shall be One, despite all its varieties and vicissitudes. And emphasize this as the common will whenever you take counsel with your fellows about the conflict.

II. The second principle I should call the principle of the deliberate search for the definition of the Common Loyalty. It is plain that most apparent conflicts of loyalty arise as incidents in a social life that actually possesses interests and ties and unities that lie much deeper than the conflict. It is often possible to make out what these deeper ties are, and in terms of them to show how the conflict can be solved.

[19] I begin here with the fairly obvious case of the family conflict over the daughter’s marriage. And here of course I need only pass the judgment that disinterested people, friends and neighbors, usually pass. The daughter, already come to years of discretion, decides in favor of a marriage that appears, to her affectionate relatives unwise. The more the persons directly concerned discuss the conflict upon its own merits, the farther apart the interests involved appear. Since the results of the proposed marriage lie in the unknown future, those who who **[sic: extra “who”]** object to the match and those who are determined that it shall be, are able to imagine the consequences much as they choose; and [20] nobody can convince anybody as to the predicted consequences. As a fact, we all know that we can none of us predict whether or no a proposed marriage will prove a happy one, or a successful one. But now there is one consequence, not of the marriage, but of any possible decision about the marriage, – there is one consequence that anybody can predict **[sic: missing “.”]** This decision, namely, will have an important effect upon the future unity of the families of those concerned. And these families, – they will go on living and loving and quarreling or coöperating, according as their members are or are not at critical moments, wise.

[21] Let all concerned then make this their starting point, – not the question: – What do you want or what do I want? nor yet the at present quite insoluble question: Are you to be happy or am I to be happy? – but only this question: What does the family tie, the spiritual unity of those who are now in one house, but who will not always be in their present relations, – what does this unity require of all alike? This last question has an obvious general answer: No family can be made one, at least under our present conditions of civilization, by thwarting the deliberate marriage choices of its members. Parents, when loyal, do not want to pass their old age as [22] parasites, living upon the spiritual sacrifices of their faithful daughters, who are to remain at home simply as thwarted beings. The family lives for the sake of helping each of its own members to live his or her own life, in unity of spirit with the rest if possible, but with just that essential opportunity to choose one’s own cause which is the only freedom which the loyal prize. On the other hand, the daughter who marries simply in order to get away from her father’s home,

has probably missed her best opportunity to learn the loyalty that begins at home and is therefore little likely to make a great success of her new home. A natural way of viewing the case is to say that [23] the family councils, in such a case, ought to be based upon the principle that nobody wants a daughter to be thwarted as to her own best ideal, while no daughter ought to forsake her first home, for such an unwelcome marriage, unless she is perfectly clear that she would willingly and heartily consent to have her own sister, or her own future daughter, go against her own judgment and contract a marriage as repugnant to her private wishes as her own is now repugnant to her relatives. In brief, a hearty effort on the part of all to let the common family loyalty speak as the one interest which is surely to be [24] considered, will of itself go far to relieve the tension of every such situation.

III.

It is this same principle of the common loyalty which is, in fact, in the minds of most loyal people when that deep and general objection to untruthfulness is in question which I mentioned at the last time as an objection common to all essentially loyal minds. I mentioned, in my sketch of the problems and conflicts of loyalty, in my discussion at the last time, [24a] the numerous cases where it may appear as if a lie were required of the loyal man in order that his cause should thereby be protected. Now I shall have occasion in a moment to speak of the really difficult cases of the casuistry of truth-telling. Here, however, I want to point out how very many of the difficulties that seem to arise in this field are, in fact, only apparent difficulties, and that, if only we think steadily of the common loyalty, the reasons which may appear, in our thoughtless moments, to be more or less strongly in favor of serving our cause by an apparently loyal lie, vanish in the light [25] of deeper considerations which show that the common loyalty neither demands nor tolerates those particular lies that a narrow view of our situation may have seemed to render expedient. This, I say, is usually the case. Let us see why.

The general grounds in favor of truth telling are, from the point of view of the genuine spirit of loyalty, very deep and far-reaching. In the long run, regarding most matters, the truth will [sic: missing “win”] out, precisely in so far as the truth is of central practical importance to those concerned in any notable and long continued enterprise. The person who habitually uses, for the sake [26] of a show of loyalty, false compliments, addressed to his hostess, or to anybody else, comes to be known ere long as a man of mere phrases, and his judgment is disregarded accordingly, so that he can no longer express effective goodwill. The physician who systematically misleads his patients as to their true condition, loses his power to say the really comforting and inspiring word when his patients are beset by false anxieties. The husband and wife who mask mutual distrust under false phrases that are invented to hide or to misrepresent their common troubles, lose the precious right to say, when trouble has to be faced; let us face it together, for we trust each other, and therefore *can* face it together, whatever it is. The [27] cause that has to be served by systematic lying, comes in the end to be regarded by its own servants as more or less of a bad joke, and they can no longer be clear in their own minds whether it is a sacred cause, for which they would give their lives, or a scandal which they despise. Since facts [sic: missing “;”] especially facts that relate to our deepest moral interests,

to our most cherished causes, to our friendships and lives and social tasks, remain always facts, and are constantly afresh to mind, while our poor words of deceit, our transient devices for misstating the facts, pass away, and leave us merely the perplexity of trying to repeat in some consistent fashion whatever fiction we [28] have imagined to be a loyal device for getting our cause out of its difficulties, – Since all this is so, the result of trying to deceive is confusing, harming, disheartening, and so is deeply opposed to the loyal spirit.

Now these observations are not intended here as in any way new. They simply make articulate some of the reasons which cause loyal people more or less instinctively to shrink from the use of the lie as a device for even the most loyal purpose. The complications such as can justify the use of lying for generally loyal purposes, must therefore be such as somehow in the particular case overrule these [29] farreaching [sic] considerations. The art of loyalty can very seldom permit the use of the lie as a tool. So much seems clear.

Moreover, there is still another and a still deeper consideration, which makes the loyal spirit opposed to the lie. Speech is an universal human instrument. Whoever employs the customary means of communication, sets an example to all men by his mode of communication, precisely in so far as his words chance to become known. He speaks not only to this or to that man with whom he is directly concerned when he speaks. He speaks, in a sense, to all men; for his words may become known to any stranger, or may be recorded, by chance so that they remain a permanent [30] document, showing how at least one man used his opportunities to speak to his fellows. Now the cause of truthful communication amongst men is the cause of the most universal human interest. Loyalty to the cause of the spread of universal loyalty amongst men, must therefore involve a deep love of truth. The fact that men lie is one of the most persistent hindrances to the growth of the loyal spirit amongst mankind at large. Hence if one of the interests of every loyal person is indeed the furthering of the common loyalty of all mankind, no loyal person can willingly use an instrument that, whatever the special end for which it is this time used, tends to [31] make men in general disloyal, precisely so far as they know that this instrument is used.

The thought then of what the common loyalty demands, – the thought that lying tends to breed lying, and that liars, like the vampires of the old stories, not only make victims of those to whom they lie, but tend to make these victims like themselves liars, just as, according to the stories, the victims of the vampires became in turn themselves vampires, – well, this thought goes far to correct those natural [32] confusions which tempt us to suppose that lying is often a useful instrument of loyalty.

IV.

But now, even by stating these farreaching principles, I am not attempting to codify the moral law. The loyal lie remains a possible, sometimes a necessary instrument. When is the use of that instrument justified? I reply, it is justified in this class of cases, – and so far as I can now see the general state of the case, it is justified only in this class of cases – a class which I will first illustrate and then try to define: – The prisoner of war, whom I mentioned at the last time, – the prisoner questioned by the enemy, may indeed be put, against his will, in the position of

having to [33] choose whether he will lie to the enemy, in case the enemy's questions cannot be evaded, or whether he will betray the trust that his cause has put into his hands, and that he is bound, perhaps sworn, to protect. In sum then, he has, against his will, to choose which of two lies he will tell, or again, to choose which of two deeds, each of which is substantially equivalent to a lie, – that is, each of which is a breach of faith, – which of these two I say he will commit. Here again the common loyalty demands of him the lie to the enemy. If he told the truth to the enemy, the enemy would in fact be bound, as a matter of good sense, to [34] receive his report with distrust, since it would be upon its face, the word of a cowardly traitor. To tell the truth to the enemy would therefore, in this case, do more to make even the enemy despise the treason of the speaker, than to teach the enemy how loyal men behave. So here indeed the attitude of the truth lover is only to be expressed by saying: “If you, the enemy who have taken me captive, – if you *will* question me, you must take your own risks as to believing my answers. I must speak to you as a prisoner, but you shall not find me speaking as a traitor. I will tell you nothing that you want to know to the detriment of my cause. You trifle with my loyalty when you ask me to do so.” This can be openly [35] said at the outset. Or again this can be sometimes more discreetly shown by the prisoner's bearing, without useless words.

Now this extreme case of the prisoner of war, simply illustrates a class of cases which includes a small, but fairly definite range of necessary and loyal lies. Their principle is, on the whole, I think clear and rigid; although here again I am attempting no code that predicts every individual case. If you are placed, against your will, where you have to choose which of two lies you will tell, which of two pledges you will break, which of two deeds, each substantially equivalent to a falsehood, to a breach of trust, or to a broken pledge, you are to com- [36] -mit, – if your choice as between these two acts is indeed your only choice, – then, but so far as I can see only then, you must honorably choose not against telling the truth, but against telling the greater lie, or against breaking the more binding pledge. In such a case you can clearly avow the principle of your act. You can say, I act for the sake of the essentially whole truth. It is not my disloyalty but my fidelity to the common truth which bids me choose to be false to the lesser obligation simply because, otherwise, I should inevitably be false to the greater. This is no case of “the end justifying the means.” It is simply the case of the art of being as truthful as one can be.

[37] Now such cases may arise whenever one has a sacred confidence to keep, – a confidence which belongs to the cause to which one is loyal, and not to the private self of the one who has it to keep, and when, on occasion, the intrusive questioner cannot be fully answered, and when his question cannot be evaded, without falsity to the cause, – that is, without betrayal of confidence, a breaking of a loyal pledge already made. In such cases, one must indeed be truthful. But one may also be forced by the situation to be truthful to the whole common cause, by giving the misleading answer to the questioner. Honorable people do not choose to stand in such situations when they can avoid them. They seek no [38] occasion to mislead. But when they face the situation and must choose which of two obligations to sacrifice, they sacrifice the less to the greater.

The principle thus defined does not justify the lie told merely for the sake of calming a sufferer's fears, or of keeping up appearances on behalf of the cause when as a fact, the cause has fallen upon evil days. On the whole, lies told to keep sick people in good spirits fail of their purpose. One of our heaviest dreads, when we are weak and suffering is often this, that we justly fear lest our best friends will now deceive us for what they take to be our good. One of the first things to do if you have to help [39] a nervous sufferer, is to win his confidence. And in the long run you cannot win his confidence unless you deserve it. Of course you say to him whatever encouraging things you believe to be essentially true. Of course you are reticent as to matters which in his condition he cannot rationally consider and fairly judge, and which he therefore ought to leave to other people. But you must, as they say, be "square" with him. He will love you for that. Occasionally for instance it may be the truth, and it may be very wise to tell him, that, in this or in this respect, he is a fool. There are nervous sufferers who take great comfort in [40] learning this very fact properly stated by a really sympathetic, but also cool and calm friend, to whom they appeal for advice. Some of them come periodically to their own chosen advisers just for the sake of getting this wholesome insight into their own foolishness impressed upon them. In any case, reticence about non-essential matters, accompanied with simple frankness as to whatever it really concerns the patient to know, is the proper policy in dealing with the weak. The truth is, on the whole, sustaining to us. Lying is enervating, in general, both to the liar and to the one who is fed upon lies.

On the other hand, the principle [41] just enunciated, namely the principle that when you are placed where you have to break one of two pledges, it is loyal to choose which one you shall break, is not confusing, but clarifying.

As to the traditional lie of politeness, – such as the lie of the bored guest on taking his leave of the hostess, – we shall see, in a moment, how very elementary practice in the art of loyalty enable [sic: "enables"] one to get into a position wherein no such lies are likely even to appear to be necessary. In such cases the supposed necessity of lying is simply due to a bad technique. It is comparable to the necessity to strike false notes in playing on the piano.

[42] V.

I come now to a third principle of the art of loyalty, – a principle that I propose to those who meet with the case of an apparently conflicting loyalty. This is the principle: – In case of doubt, your true loyalty demands that, in the conflict, you should give preference to the cause to whose service you were already most fully committed before the conflict appeared to arise. And – if you are already more or less obviously committed to both of the conflicting causes, prefer the one to which you have first, or most certainly committed yourself. [43] I may call this the principle of the prior, or, if you will, of the once established loyalty. In business, and in the professions, this principle is extremely well known, and is constantly applied. The lawyer who has once accepted a retainer, is bound to undertake, as a lawyer, no later professional obligation that would even indirectly bind him to serve interests that conflict with the just and legal interests of his client so long as the relation to that client lasts. But, on the other hand, since, as a lawyer, he is first of all an officer of the courts in which he practices and is a servant of the law, his

professional con- [44] -science, if he is indeed a thoroughly loyal man, will forbid him to further his client's interests by means that being essentially illegal or unjust, conflict with his prior loyalty, which is owed to his profession and to the law. In business, if two contracts or two other business obligations appear to conflict, the prior agreement is, in general, the obviously binding one. The exceptions here, if there are exceptions, would be determined by the technical peculiarities of the business in question, and so would again involve a fidelity to which all concerned are understood to be committed. In our civil war, a loyal [45] might might [sic: "man might"] have decided that it was his duty to fight on the Northern side; another might have decided, in an equally loyal way, to fight for the South. But, in a case like that of our Civil War, where only the outcome could show who was right, neither man could change sides during the conflict without treason. I may decide for myself as to where my loyalty lies; but I am not at liberty to change my decision unless I clearly see that the former cause to which I have committed myself is indeed an essentially bad cause, and bad because it is totally false to the principle of serving the universal loyalty.

[46] The principle of the prior loyalty is thus essentially opposed to fickleness. Fickleness is the most dangerous foe of the art of loyalty. I admit of course that there are cases where one may discover that the cause to which he is committed is a cause so much opposed to the interests of universal loyalty that a growth in knowledge forces him to abandon it as a bad cause. Thus, for instance, the loyal member of a robber band, brought up in blindness to the evil of his cause, might be conceived to come to consciousness so as to perceive that his band was living by making [47] war on the universal loyalty. Or again, after the way, a former Confederate might well come to see that any further conspiracy made for the sake of renewing the Confederacy, would indeed be an attack upon humanity itself. In such cases, it may become a duty to let a prior loyalty lapse. But such cases arise only when our knowledge of our world is profoundly altered, or else when our social world itself has essentially changed its whole situation. In general, I may not capriciously abandon my once chosen cause. Loyalty involves [48] a pact for life. And nobody, I repeat, can ask anything better than a cause which binds for life. Of course the circumstances of our loyalty may often be altered at our own will, as when a teacher or a clergyman accepts a call to a new place; but even such changes must not be matters of caprice. They must be due to the discovery that one can better serve the essential cause through the new undertaking.

The principle of the prior loyalty solves many of the conflicts of life. The calm assurance that fickleness can never be, in itself, the way [49] to the loyal life, goes far in helping us to calm the storm of fleeting passions. The art of loyalty, in the presence of our endlessly changing moods, depends upon knowing, and resolving that, although our cause can be and should be endlessly developed and idealized and universalized, we do not propose to break with it so long as it is a morally sound cause at all. And its moral soundness must be judged by the fact that it is a cause by means of which we serve, in our own way, the end of helping all men, through the example of our fidelity, to be themselves faithful.

[50] VI.

Three principles of the Art of Loyalty have thus been set before you: – First the principle: Steadfastly train yourself to the resolve that your various causes shall be harmonized; Secondly the principle: In case of the appearance of conflict, look beneath the superficial conflict to find if possible the deeper common loyalty, and act in the light of that common loyalty; Thirdly, the principle: If conflict cannot otherwise be resolved, act in consistency with your prior loyalty, remembering that, if a change of flag may indeed be sometimes required by some transformation of your insight, [51] fickleness itself is never a part of loyalty. Your cause, once chosen, is your larger self. Fickleness, if deep and deliberate is moral suicide.

With these three principles in mind we are able, I believe, to solve by individual choice, and by native tact and skill, most of the problems of the conflict of loyalties. The art of loyalty is a long art. It ought to be the art of life in all of us. It is no art to be carried out by rule of thumb. But it has principles, and some of these I have been trying to state.

[52] Some of you may still be curious to know what further I should say regarding what I conceive to be the application of the art of loyalty to the [sic: unnecessary “the”] certain of the special cases that I mentioned at the last time, and that I have not yet fully considered today. I add a word or two by way of illustration.

First, and simplest of our remaining cases is the problem of the loyal word of acknowledgement to one’s hostess as one takes leave. Here, I have already said, a reasonable skill in the art of loyalty relieves [52a] one, in general, of any even apparent obligation to lie. The first duty of guest to host is loyalty to the social enterprise in question. Where it is not in my power, or is not my will, loyally to approve of the social enterprise in which I am invited to take part, it is my simple duty, and of course my right, to decline the invitation. Having accepted, it is my only loyal act to go prepared to coöperate, and to find the occasion an opportunity and not a bore. If, under these conditions I am bored, it is I myself who am, under normal social conditions, the worst bore present, at least to myself; and about this [53] painful fact, if it is indeed a fact, I loyally owe to all concerned a reasonable reticence; because the mere accidents of my moods are nobody’s concern but my own, unless my moods are of some positive social service. My will, meanwhile should remain throughout one of sincere loyal devotion to the cause of the whole social unity in question, – a cause which my hostess personally represents. If I can retain this will, I shall sincerely appreciate the devotion shown by my hostess, and I shall be ready to say as much, in any fitting way, at the end of the enterprise. If I cannot [54] retain this will, if I move about during the entertainment in discontent, my whole presence at the affair is one living lie, to which my concluding set speech only gives the final seal. But if I am indeed practised [sic] in the art of loyalty, what I say in the end will simply be a sincere expression of the only spirit in which I have any right whatever to accept anybody’s hospitality. In case I have this right spirit, however, I shall say nothing, and I shall not be tempted to say anything, about the affair after I have left the house, which my hostess, if in her right mind would be unwilling to hear. And [55] this last remark gives the sufficient test by which I can know that my compliment, if sensible, was indeed essentially since [sic: “sincere”]. Whatever social compliment is more than this, cometh of vanity, and is an offense in the end to all sensible

people. Mere flattery is not loyalty. Loyal people may be amused by such flattery; but they do not really prize it. They expect what they offer, – namely a hearty willingness to express, by word and by deed a wholesome devotion to the common cause.

One other type of doubtful cases [sic: “case”] [56] remains to be mentioned. The elder brother, tempted to conceal from the too austere father the younger brother’s misdeeds, – the lovers, tempted either to conceal from each other their fickle moods, or else to break their engagement by saying: “I believe that I have grown weary of you” – all such persons are in a position where they are too deep in the complexities of their passing moods and of their confusing situations to see at the moment wisely where their deeper loyalty is seated, what the common cause requires them to do, and what their prior [57] obligation demands. Their one resort is very often this, to lay their cases before almost any sensible and experienced and disinterested friend, who, having himself sometimes been between the devil and the deep sea, and who, himself **having/loving** [sic: unclear...looks more like an h, but no apparent a (scribble looks more like an o) – if I had to choose one, I’d say it’s “having”] loyalty, can help them to see clearly what their cause is, and what their loyal will is. Such a friend might see how to mediate between the austere father and the erring younger brother. Or he might be able to help the lovers to distinguish the false fire from the true, – the calm light of loyalty [58] from the mere will o’ the wisp of ill humor or of transient passion. Such a friend need not be infallible. He may be quite unable to decide for them. But he may be able to help them to see how to decide for themselves.

For after all, the art of loyalty is the art of discovering what your own rational will is, and of then discovering how to be true to that will, whatever your tumult, your moods, or your life. The only adviser worth having is the one who will help you to know how to make your own loyal decisions.