

From the Pages of Walden and "Civil Disobedience"

By Henry David Thoreau

As if you could kill time without injuring eternity. (from *Walden*, page 11)

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. (from *Walden*, page 11)

It is never too late to give up your prejudices. (from *Walden*, page 11)

Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind. (from *Walden*, pages 15-16)

My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles; to be hindered from accomplishing which for want of a little common sense, a little enterprise and business talent, appeared not so sad as foolish. (from *Walden*, page 19)

Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes. (from *Walden*, page 21)

Men have become the tools of their tools. (from *Walden*, page 33)

I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. (from *Walden*, page 69)

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. (from *Walden*, page 74)

Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then. (from *Walden*, page 95)

I was seized and put into jail, because, as I have elsewhere related, I did not pay a tax to, or recognize the authority of, the state which buys and sells men, women, and children, like cattle at the door of its senatehouse. I had gone down to the woods for other purposes. But, wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions, and, if they can, constrain him to belong to their desperate odd-fellow society. It is true, I might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run "amok" against society; but I preferred that society should run "amok" against me, it being the desperate party. (from *Walden*, page 137)

I found in myself, and still find, an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life, as do most men, and another toward primitive rank and savage one, and I reverence them Both. I love the wild not less than the good. (pg 166, Walden)

If the day and the nights are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal, - that is your success. All nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself. The greatest gains and values are farthest from being appreciated. We easily come to doubt if they exist. We soon forget them. They are the highest reality. Perhaps the facts most astounding and most real are never communicated by man to man. The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched. (pg 171, Walden)

The universe is wider than our views of it. (from *Walden*, page 250)

In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them. (from *Walden*, page 253)

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. (from *Walden*, page 258)

Law never made men a whit more just. (from "*Civil Disobedience*", page 266)

Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? (from "*Civil Disobedience*", page 286)