

wondrous words: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified"?

The whole of human life is there. Shall a man cultivate himself? No, not primarily. Shall a man serve the world, strive to increase the kingdom of God in the world? Yes, indeed, he shall. How shall he do it? By cultivating himself, and instantly he is thrown back upon his own life. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified."

I am my best, not simply for myself, but for the world. My brethren, is there anything in all the teachings that man has had from his fellow man, all that has come down to him from the lips of God, that is nobler, that is more far-reaching than that—to be my best not simply for my own sake, but for the sake of the world into which, setting my best, I shall make that world more complete, I shall do my little part to renew and to recreate it in the image of God?

That is the law of my existence. And the man that makes that the law of his existence neither neglects himself nor his fellow men, neither becomes the self-absorbed student and cultivator of his own life upon the one hand, nor does he become, abandoning himself, simply the wasting benefactor of his brethren upon the other. You can help your fellow men: you must help your fellow men; but the only way you can help them is by being the noblest and the best man that it is possible for you to be.

I watch the workman build upon the building which by and by is to soar into the skies, to toss its pinnacles up to the heaven, and I see him looking up and wondering where those pinnacles are to be, thinking how high they are to be, measuring the feet, wondering how they are to be built, and all the time he is cramming a rotten stone into the

building just where he has set to work. Let him forget the pinnacles, if he will, or hold only the floating image of them in his imagination for his inspiration; but the thing that he must do is to put a brave, strong soul, an honest and substantial life into the building just where he is now at work.

It seems to me that that comes home to us all. Men are questioning now, as they never have questioned before, whether Christianity is indeed the true religion which is to be the salvation of the world. They are feeling how the world needs salvation, how it needs regeneration, how it is wrong and bad all through and through, mixed with the good that is in it everywhere.

Everywhere there is the good and the bad, and the great question that is on men's minds to-day, as I believe it has never been upon men's minds before, is this: Is this Christian religion, with its high pretensions, this Christian life that claims so much for itself, is it competent for the task that it has undertaken to do? Can it meet all these human problems, and relieve all these human miseries, and fulfill all these human hopes?

It is the old story over again, when John the Baptist, puzzled in his prison, said to Jesus, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" It seems to me that the Christian Church is hearing that cry in its ears to-day: "Art thou he that should come?" Can you do this which the world unmistakably needs to be done?

Christian men, it is for us to give our bit of answer to that question. It is for us, in whom the Christian Church is at this moment partially embodied, to declare that Christianity, that the Christian faith, the Christian manhood, can do that for the world which the world needs. You say, "What can I do?"

You can furnish one Christian life. You can furnish a life so faithful to every duty, so ready for every service, so determined not to commit every sin, that the great Christian Church shall be the stronger for your living in it, and the problem of the world be answered, and a certain great peace come into this poor, perplexed phase of our humanity as it sees that new revelation of what Christianity is. Yes, Christ can give the world the thing it needs in unknown ways and methods that we have not yet begun to suspect.

Christianity has not yet been tried. My friends, no man dares to condemn the Christian faith to-day, because the Christian faith has not been tried. Not until men get rid of the thought that it is a poor machine, an expedient for saving them from suffering and pain, not until they get the grand idea of it as the great power of God present in and through the lives of men, not until then does Christianity enter upon its true trial and become ready to show what it can do. Therefore we struggle against our sin in order that men may be saved around us, and not simply that our own souls may be saved.

Tell me you have a sin that you mean to commit this evening that is going to make this night black. What can keep you from committing that sin? Suppose you look into its consequences. Suppose the wise man tells you what will be the physical consequences of that sin. You shudder and you shrink, and perhaps you are partially deterred. Suppose you see the glory that might come to you, physical, temporal, spiritual, if you do not commit that sin. The opposite of it shows itself to you—the blessing and the richness in your life.

Again there comes a great power that shall control your lust and wickedness. Suppose there comes to you something

even deeper than that, no consequence on consequence at all, but simply an abhorrence for the thing, so that your whole nature shrinks from it as the nature of God shrinks from a sin that is polluting and filthy and corrupt and evil.

They are all great powers. Let us thank God for them all! He knows that we are weak enough to need every power that can possibly be brought to bear upon our feeble lives: but if, along with all of them, there could come this other power; if along with them there could come the certainty that if you refrain from that sin to-night you make the sum of sin that is in the world, and so the sum of all temptation that is in the world, and so the sum of future evil that is to spring out of temptation in the world, less, shall there not be a nobler impulse rise up in your heart, and shall you not say: "I will not do it; I will be honest, I will be sober, I will be pure, at least, to-night"?

I dare to think that there are men here to whom that appeal can come, men who perhaps will be all dull and deaf if one speaks to them about their personal salvation; who, if one dares to picture to them, appealing to their better nature, trusting to their nobler soul, that there is in them the power to save other men from sin, and to help the work of God by the control of their own passions and the fulfilment of their own duty, will be stirred to the higher life.

Men—very often we do not trust them enough—will answer to the higher appeal that seems to be beyond them when the poor, lower appeal that comes within the region of their selfishness is cast aside, and they will have nothing to do with it.

Oh, this marvellous, this awful power that we have over other people's lives! Oh! the power of the sin that you have done years and years ago! It is awful to think of it. I

think there is hardly anything more terrible to the human thought than this—the picture of a man who, having sinned years and years ago in a way that involved other souls in his sin, and then, having repented of his sin and undertaken another life, knows certainly that the power, the consequence of that sin is going on outside of his reach, beyond even his ken and knowledge. He cannot touch it.

You wronged a soul ten years ago. You taught a boy how to tell his first mercantile lie; you degraded the early standards of his youth. What has become of that boy to-day? You may have repented. He has passed out of your sight. He has gone years and years ago. Somewhere in this great, multitudinous mass of humanity he is sinning and sinning and reduplicating and extending the sin that you did.

You touched the faith of some believing soul years ago with some miserable sneer of yours, with some cynical and sceptical disparagement of God and of the man who is the utterance of God upon the earth. You taught the soul that was enthusiastic to be full of scepticisms and doubts.

You wronged a woman years ago, and her life has gone out from your life, you cannot begin to tell where. You have repented of your sin. You have bowed yourself, it may be, in dust and ashes. You have entered upon a new life. You are pure to-day. But where is the sceptical soul? Where is the ruined woman whom you sent forth into the world out of the shadow of your sin years ago?

You cannot touch that life. You cannot reach it. You do not know where it is. No steps of yours, quickened with all your earnestness, can pursue it. No contrition of yours can draw back its consequences. Remorse cannot force the bullet back again into the gun from which it once has gone forth. It makes life awful to the man who has ever sinned,

who has ever wronged and hurt another life because of this sin, because no sin ever was done that did not hurt another life.

I know the mercy of our God, that while he has put us into each other's power to a fearful extent, he never will let any soul absolutely go to everlasting ruin for another's sin; and so I dare to see the love of God pursuing that lost soul where you cannot pursue it.

But that does not for one moment lift the shadow from your heart, or cease to make you tremble when you think of how your sin has outgrown itself and is running far, far away where you can never follow it.

Thank God the other thing is true as well. Thank God that when a man does a bit of service, however little it may be, of that too he can never trace the consequences. Thank God that that which in some better moment, in some nobler inspiration, you did ten years ago to make your brother's faith a little more strong, to let your shop-boy confirm and not doubt the confidence in man which he had brought into his business, to establish the purity of a soul instead of staining it and shaking it, thank God, in this quick, electric atmosphere in which we live, that, too, runs forth.

Do not say in your terror, "I will do nothing." You must do something. Only let Christ tell you—let Christ tell you that there is nothing that a man rests upon in the moment, that he thinks of, as he looks back upon it when it has sunk into the past, with any satisfaction, except some service to his fellow man, some strengthening and helping of a human soul.

Two men are walking down the street together and talking away. See what different conditions those two men are in. One of them has his soul absolutely full of the desire

to help his fellow man. He peers into those faces as he goes, and sees the divine possibility that is in them, and he sees the divine nature everywhere. They are talking about the idlest trifles, about the last bit of local Boston politics. But in their souls one of those men has consecrated himself, with the new morning, to the glorious service of God, and the other of them is asking how he may be a little richer in his miserable wealth when the day sinks.

Oh, we look into the other world and read the great words and hear it said, Between me and thee, this and that, there is a great gulf fixed; and we think of something that is to come in the eternal life. Is there any gulf in eternity, is there any gulf between heaven and hell that is wider, and deeper, and blacker, that is more impassable than that gulf which lies between these two men going upon their daily way?

Oh, friends, it is not that God is going to judge us some day. That is not the awful thing. It is that God knows us now. If I stop an instant and know that God knows me through all these misconceptions and blunders of my brethren, that God knows me—that is the awful thing. The future judgment shall but tell it. It is here, here upon my conscience, now. It is awful to think how the commonplace things that men can do, the commonplace thoughts that men can think, the commonplace lives that men can live, are but in the bosom of the future. The thing that impresses me more and more is this—that we only need to have extended to the multitude that which is at this moment present in the few, and the world really would be saved.

There is but the need of the extension into a multitude of souls of that which a few souls have already attained in their consecration of themselves to human good and to the service

of God, and I will not say the millennium would have come, I don't know much about the millennium, but heaven would have come, the New Jerusalem would be here. There are men enough in this church this morning, there are men enough sitting here within the sound of my voice to-day, if they were inspired by the spirit of God and counted it the great privilege of their life to do the work of God—there are men enough here to save this city, and to make this a glowing city of our Lord, to relieve its poverty, to lighten its darkness, to lift up the cloud that is upon hearts, to turn it into a great, I will not say psalm-singing city, but God-serving, God-abiding city, to touch all the difficult problems of how society and government ought to be organized then with a power with which they should yield their difficulty and open gradually.

The light to measure would be clear enough if only the spirit is there. Give me five hundred men, nay, give me one hundred men of the spirit that I know to-day in three men that I well understand, and I will answer for it that the city shall be saved. And you, my friend, are one of the five hundred—you are one of the one hundred.

“Oh, but,” you say, “is not this slavery over again? You have talked about freedom, and here I am once more a slave. I had about got free from the bondage of my fellow men, and here I am right in the midst of it again. What has become of my personality, of my independence, if I am to live thus?”

Ay, you have got to learn what every noblest man has always learned, that no man becomes independent of his fellow men excepting in serving his fellow men. You have got to learn that Christianity comes to us not simply as a luxury but as a force, and no man who values Christianity simply