

This we must do, by the help of God, in forms which correspond with the trials and the temper of the age. Behind every social question there lies not only a moral but a religious question. And the final solution of every question belongs to the highest sphere. "You cannot," in the words of a noble leader of modern democracy, "change the fate of man by embellishing his material dwelling." We most touch the soul if we are to change the mode of living. And if we believe that the Gospel teaches us not only to relieve distress but to remove it; not only to alleviate sorrow but to transfigure it; we must make good our faith.

And yet than this we have a wider duty. Many who allow that Christianity can deal with individuals deny that it has any message for classes or states. Its virtues, they say, are the petty virtues of private life; its promises, the gratification of the small objects of personal aim; towards the struggles of society, of the nation, of the race, it can at best produce nothing better than a temper of benevolent neutrality. We know that the charge is essentially false, but we must admit without reserve that we have given occasion to it. We have not dared, as we should have done, to assert that our faith in Christ, the Saviour of the world, must be the inspiration of our national policy; that our faith in the Divine Fatherhood must be the measure of our social obligations. It is not indeed easy to determine in every case the special application of the truth. It is not necessary that we should determine it, but if we cannot improvise peremptory judgments, we can always affirm an eternal principle; we can quell in our hearts that spirit of self-assertion which fills us with restless jealousy till our personal demands are fully paid, and that spirit of larger, deadlier self-assertion, miscalled patriotism, which tempts us to think that the power of a nation is the power of dictation and not of service, and that every failure must be washed out in blood. We can do this; and shall we venture to say that we have done it?

3. We need once more to gain and exhibit a great ideal. We are troubled on one side by the spirit of irony which shrinks from the avowal of its loftiest aims; and on the other side by the spirit of confidence which assumes that all will be well if we go with the stream. We play with noble thoughts. Now we want insight, and now we want courage. In both cases we want faith in men, and that which alone can give it, faith in God. No word is used more familiarly than "progress," but it is very hard to see the goal towards which we are supposed to be moving. The greatest triumphs of modern science are, as we have seen, fruitful in evils no less than in blessings. They have increased our power, our opportunities, our resources; but in themselves they cannot open the heavens and show the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God: they cannot give us that vision of immeasurable majesty which fills the whole soul with the consciousness of its destiny, and that vision of sovereign love which brings the assurance that attainment is within our reach. For we do not think too much of life, too much of humanity, too much of men, but infinitely too little, because we allow that which can be seen by the eye of sense to furnish the data of our estimate. But let us bring the gospel of Christ, Maker and Heir of all things, into connection not with

ourselves only but with the world and then there will rise before us a spectacle which move the dullest with enthusiasm and touches the most disconsolate with hope; a spectacle of a life unfolded through the ages in which, in spite of every partial loss and every temporary check, a divine counsel of righteousness is fulfilled; of a humanity through whose discipline and victory, won by sacrifice offered in the ministry of every member, the end of the whole creation is reached in the peace of an indissoluble harmony; of men who each in their appointed place receive the inheritance of the fathers and transmit it enriched by their own toils to a new generation and enter living and dying into the joy of the Lord. What ideal can be offered to the spirit which is greater or more true?

The sense of responsibility, the energy of spiritual force the power of a divine ideal, how can we gain them? To this question, which is for us the question of all questions, the past returns no uncertain answer. Each new revelation of Christ among men has hitherto found expression in some social movement, in some form of disciplined life which has embodied and interpreted it. And Christ is revealing Himself through the very needs which trouble us. We can see now, as men could not see in earlier times how there has been a law in the growth of the race; how man was taken from himself by the ancient organizations of the state; how he was taken from the world by the dominant religious communities of the middle ages; how he has been taken from society by the isolating narrowness of many forms of popular Protestantism; and seeing this we can see also, when we let the Incarnation give its perfect message, that he is given back to himself, to the world, to society in the Risen Christ. This then is the revelation which we have to embody; to embody in the eyes of all by some fellowship which shall strike the imagination; which shall teach by manifold experience the power of social relationships and social obligations in commerce, in politics, in religion; which shall claim for the family and the nation their proper parts in preparing the Kingdom of God on earth, in bringing to redeemed humanity the fullness of its life in Christ.

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\*"Prophetic Ideas and Ideals," by Rev. Prof. Jordan, D. D., Queen's College, Kingston. Fleming H. Revell Co., Toronto, 91c.

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