

AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE

"They tell me that I have stood for the last time in the pulpit of *All People's*; that on Monday night I shall be unfrocked by the hands that ordained me; for my ministerial standing was created by this church which now proposes to take it away. This act, more than a conviction, will seem my ruin. I write to say I cannot call that ruin to which a man goes willingly.

"It is not my soul that hangs in the balance, but another's. While this man struggles, I declare again that I will not break in upon him. I can reach out and touch him; but I will not. He will read this. I say to him, 'Brother, wait! Do not hurry. I can hold your load while until you get the grapple on your spirit.'

"But for saying this, I am cast out.

"Men observe to me: 'What a pity!' I say to you, 'No pity at all!'

"Is a minister who would not thus suffer worthy to be a minister? The conception can be broadened. Is a man? Is an editor worthy to be an editor, a merchant, a teacher, a lawyer, a doctor, standing as each must sometime where the issue is sharply drawn between loyalty and disloyalty to truth or trust,—is any of the truly worthy or truly true, who would not willingly suffer all that is demanded of me?

"It does not require a great man to be true to the claim of his hand: nor a minister. I know policemen and men of terrors who are that. To be that, upon the human side, has been almost the sum of my religious practice — not my profession, but my *practice*. By that habit I have gained what I have gained — *and lost what I have lost*. Humbled to the dust, I dare yet to make one boast: I have not failed in these small human loyalties, except that my capacities have failed.