

of us all, and when it is once thoroughly recognized, what an intense impulse does it not supply to our acquisition of that knowledge which has been, and is justly said to be Power. The child is not thoroughly convinced of the nature and effect of contact with flame till he has burnt his fingers, and this experiment once gone through is generally sufficient to guard him from further pain from that source, yet it is not necessary nor at all judicious that every child should be directed to put his finger in the fire to learn its effects, for it is possible to teach their nature without that painful experience; nor is it necessary we should lie or steal to know the penalties which are attached to wrong action, for a wise parent or judicious friend can sow the seeds of goodness in the child's heart which will grow in due time to a saving knowledge of truth without the hardship of an actual experiment of the effects produced by an infringement of moral obligations, and this is to me the highest education before spoken of, and will lead to all that we desire for ourselves and posterity—a condition in which shall be attained the greatest possible amount of happiness. But here again we have a difficulty, and that is the necessities of our existence demand that we should, to use the same illustration, go on burning our fingers day after day, while life lasts, as it is justly provided that we should earn our bread by the sweat of our brow, and what could be more reasonable than that—the wear of material in our bodies should produce that which shall restore it, if not to its original condition, at least to an approximation and sometimes an improvement of it.

I have no sympathy with those who speak and write of labor as a curse, and that idea is far from being the belief of the most intelligent portion of those who earn their living by manual in contradistinction to mental labor. The world is controlled everywhere by these two great elements—mind and force—and by them all matter is ever being influenced, and a proper appreciation of this fact gives the highest of all motives, for carefully considered right action, which embodies, as I understand it, the modern idea of the "survival of the fittest." Picture to yourself what this world would be without the struggles which our forefathers have endured, and those we are individually encountering every day.

The effort to make desert places productive would cease, and the wilderness would remain in all its chaotic confusion. We are no doubt laying our motives open to misconstruction in thus placing our dependence on the basis of an educated judgment, but more and more do we perceive the necessity for this, and the grievous wrongs which by it may be righted, and we are not alone, although the masses hold aloof; they too are the victims of an iron necessity, but I cannot subdue the hope that in some future, brighter and more beautiful hereafter the necessity which binds them to creeds and dogmas, fables and fairy tales of the past, will have ceased to exist, and they will look back with astonishment on the worthless chains which bound them. We are doing a noble work, and nothing could help us more than the attitude assumed by the most advanced of our modern clergy, whether it be in their attempts to reconcile modern developments to traditions of the past, or their hopeless abandonment of the task and recognition of the claims which human reason is incessantly urging.

There are instances which I might cite in support of this position in every part of the world where modern education has made progress, and although they still continue to speak in support and illustration of traditional texts, they feel the necessity and responsibility of their position and know they can no longer afford to remain ignorant spectators of scientific achievements, but must drink from the running brooks of Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Carlyle and others not less eminent in their several spheres, or better still, search out the living springs for themselves. Creeds are not made of cast iron, that even their best exponents and defenders are now candidly admitting, and the arguments which are urged for their support, as such, simply serve to show how transparently flimsy they are. I had occasion recently to listen to such a defence in one of our city churches which have been awakened of late to something approaching a due sense of the responsibility of their position, and the rev. gentle-

man adduced some, to me, weak arguments in support of creeds. There was, he said, a necessity for concise statements of truth to keep man in his position within certain limits in their Sunday discourses, but which, as a matter of policy, it was injudicious to give marked prominence to in any other direction, and in illustration he stated he had known men holding Unitarian, Baptist, and other opinions which he did not say were in strict accordance with the principles of the church of which he is pastor, but which I understood him to imply were contradictory to his understanding of them, still receiving and enjoying all the rights and privileges of that church. He also adduced the argument that it was necessary to sink deep in the hearts of all a belief in what he considered the essentials of Christianity, the atonement and eternal punishment doctrines; and the way he considered best to attain this, to him, much to be desired result, was simply to debar discussion of these points entirely till the youth had ripened in old age, and then, he said, there need be no fear of him departing from the way in which he should go.

These are simply illustrations of the arguments which are being held up as irrefutable every day by our clergy of all denominations, but which to an unprejudiced mind carry their own refutation with them, and are best answered by letting them alone or placing alongside with them statements dictated by a free and educated mind. Why should men who are set up and supported as teachers of mankind keep within certain limits? The same rev. gentleman spoke with holy dread of the possibility that were he not bound by a creed he might probably astonish them by giving a political lecture instead of the customary sermon, and I ask why should this man, evidently possessed of considerable talent, feel himself restrained from expressing his political or any other ideas that might affect for good the commonwealth. By so doing he need not become a partizan, which would lower his dignity, nor yet be crazed with revolutionary solutions of social problems, but go to the brooks of clear thought embodied in the works of men who have raised politics to the dignity of a science and he will invariably find himself invigorated and refreshed, ready to do battle for truth and right against error and wrong. We must realize individually that Sunday is not more holy than any other portion of time, and although it is most needfully and judiciously devoted to rest, we must not lose sight of the fact that rest does not consist in absence of all activity, but rather in a readjustment of our conditions and requirements.

Moral responsibility to each other and to nature, and through them and it to the controlling power is the highest mode of life and leads to the greatest amount of happiness in the individual and all he comes in contact with. Before committing the most trivial, private or social act were we to ask ourselves, how will it affect ourselves, then, how will it affect our neighbor, and, lastly, is it in accordance with the best in nature; how many acts that bear dreadful penalties would we not seek to avoid and escape the pain with which they are fraught? How often do we consider when our appetite is tempted the affects of an overloaded stomach or the loss which humanity may incur by being deprived of our services in consequence, or how unlike it is to the seasonable shower which feeds the thirsty earth? Or, let us apply the same principle to our relations with those who hold different religious ideas from ours, and ask, how does this freedom of thought and expression which we claim the right to exercise affect us as individuals, then as citizens or countrymen, and, lastly, nature itself? Look at it thus and we will know our responsibility for everything we say, and if it may effect injuriously the just interests of any other being we are most assuredly deserving of punishment, which will as assuredly overtake us. The world requires the best service of every conscious individual it contains, and in proportion as this is tendered to it, is a man deserving of true happiness—and attains it. Men have, no doubt, mistaken error for truth and gone wrong, but there are few if any, who are possessed of no true knowledge from which springs right action. The most wretched criminal were he not moved by circumstances and associations which have kept and keep him in that condition might have occupied a superior and more beautiful place in nature, and he who shall strive to shirk the responsibility