

nature—death, life, germination, reproduction, resurrection—so the Christian Church focalizes every known law of God, and when properly understood stands as the fullest revelation of the divine will. To ask for a sign in these days when the Church spires cleave every sky, rise from every hillside, nestle in every valley, and when the songs of grateful worshipers are heard in every land under the binding heavens, is as though one stood under the blazing light of midday and demanded proof that there was a sun. The sun is its own proof. No other evidence is necessary. Anything so supremely and magnificently self-evident is such a demonstration that argument is senseless.

And how has the Church attained its growth and proportions so that it is the mightiest moral and spiritual force in all the earth? Simply by entering into the spirit of the lesson which it is our privilege to study to-day.

1. *The Christian's Armor.* Not coats of mail, nor glittering spear; not massive shield, nor two-edged sword; not javelins that may be thrown with terrible force, nor daggers held with merciless hand—nothing of this kind is allowed in Christian warfare. The Christian's weapons are not carnal, but spiritual. He is to be armed with the mind of Christ; anything more is contrary to the divine plan, anything less will result in defeat. How strange that in a rough, brawling world like this, where men take each other by the throat, where each one seems to battle with his neighbor, where the struggle is so fierce that the weak and defenseless are crushed remorselessly, that meekness, gentleness, kindness, tenderness, are the only weapons permissible to the Christian, and that when he assumes any other he is violating the spirit of the Gospel! And if these things are so now, how much more when Peter wrote the words of our lesson? For what chance seemingly had meekness then? or who cared anything for gentleness? In those days the battlefield, the arena, the amphitheater, had the chief place in popular thought, and men were valued only for their skill in conflict and their power to fight. And yet—and here is the miracle of it—wherever men were armed with the mind of Christ they prevailed! Brutality went down before meekness; cruelty fled before kindness; the sword was sheathed in the presence of gentleness, and tenderness was mightier than an army with banners. The mind of Christ is a tremendous force. Nothing can resist it. It is not the man of high temper, of imperious will, of domineering mind, of tyrannous spirit, who gains power and influence in the life of the

world. But the quiet man, the patient man, the man who controls himself, who is meek under provocation, who endures without complaint, who returns good for evil, who loves his enemies and even blesses those who curse him—that man invariably wins in the end. Sooner or later the meek shall inherit the earth.

2. *The Christian's Attitude.* Everywhere the Gospel repudiates compromise. There is no parleying with sin. In Athens Paul denounced idolatry. In Ephesus he exposed sorcery. Wherever the disciples went they were unsparing in their reproofs of evil. No matter how deeply bedded were the habits and customs of the people, or how interwoven they had become with the national life, immediately the standards of the Gospel were raised against them, and from that standard there was no appeal. No wonder Peter writes, "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess." Doubtless they thought it very strange that a little company of poor, plain, simple men and women should hold themselves apart from customs which prevailed so generally, and they laughed at them, held them up to ridicule, made them a public reproach, and in every way possible tried to have them fall in with the habits of the people. Here and there one failed, for the pressure was very severe and the persecution most bitter, but the great body were marvelously loyal. Hence they would not eat meats that were tainted with idolatry; they would not share in wine cup orgies; they rigorously abstained from the evils by which they were surrounded, and if needs be would die rather than violate their covenant as disciples of Christ. And their attitude should be ours. For the same principles apply, the same laws are in force. There never can be any compromise between good and evil. Each is unalterably opposed to the other, and neither can exist in the presence of the other. The removal of light means the incoming of darkness, when darkness is driven out it is by the power of light. Our attitude therefore must be that of the early Christians. To compromise with evil is an impossibility. We may try to do so, but that means a lowering of the flag, which is nothing more or less than treason. One may be a traitor without firing a gun, or accepting a bribe, or donning the enemy's uniform. Anything less than absolute abstinence from evil is a surrender of principles for which Christ died.

3. *The Christian's Alertness.* The price of safety is eternal vigilance. See the sailor on the ship's bow peering into the darkness or fog. Should he withdraw his eyes from their ap-