

so powerful and far-reaching in its ultimate effects that he had a very inadequate idea of all that it implied. Living in the belief that in a short time the Lord would return to establish upon earth the Kingdom of Heaven, he was eager for immediate results, and could not possibly understand that the new faith was one which would only manifest its full power in the slow process of the ages; that it would ultimately effect the regeneration, not merely of a few small religious communities, but of the whole race; that its influence would be felt in all phases of human life, and that its immortal spirit was not dependent upon the imperfect body of beliefs which to him seemed to be the sum of all truth. By us, therefore, who belong to a much larger and fuller world than they, the words of the Apostle may be interpreted in a wider sense than was directly present to his mind when he penned them. Human nature, in its fundamental character, is the same now as it was in the first century of our era; but, living in a world which has drawn its inspiration from the long toil and travail of eighteen centuries, we may well see in the Apostle's words a depth of meaning that was not apparent to those whom he first addressed. The "Spirit" is still operative, and woe be to us if we "quench" it; there are still "prophesyings," which we shall "despise" at our peril; and the task is still laid upon us to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good."

Now, it would be a mark of that peculiar narrowness which is apt to spring up in sheltered academic circles, were we to regard the university as the only organ by which the true may be winnowed from the false. The full judgment of the Christian consciousness can only be obtained through the exercise of all the organs by which our higher life is sustained and developed. Humanity does not develop in parts, but "moves all together, if it move at all"; and the only way in which we can expect to grasp the truth in its fulness is by basing our judgments upon the complex experience of the whole race. But, on the other hand, there is a very real function which a university, that realizes its true mission, may discharge; and it is to this function that I would shortly direct your attention.

The university represents, mainly at least, that inextinguishable desire for clear and definite knowledge, which, as Aristotle tells us, "all men have by nature." Men not only act but desire to understand what is the meaning of their action; and it is only when they bring this meaning to clear consciousness that they attain to all that they are fitted to become. While we must never forget that the basis of all truth lies in the actual experiences of life, without which no true theory of life is possible;

yet without theory experience is never complete. We may even say that "theory" is itself a form, and in one sense the highest form, of "experience"; for it enables us to sum up and grasp clearly what otherwise we should hold in a confused and fragmentary way. Now, I am far from saying that the expression of this theoretical life—this ultimate form of experience—is found nowhere but within the walls of universities. Not only are there universities which have a very inadequate conception of their true function, but we may safely say that all the best universities in the world, even in their sum, have no monopoly of truth. No doubt it is a part of the function of a university to be a pioneer in new regions of thought; but I do not think that that is its main function. Genius is a law to itself; it cannot be taught; it comes as the immediate inspiration of God, and bloweth where it listeth; "universal as the casing air," it scorns to be confined within prescribed limits. It is therefore in a sense an accident when from the ranks of university men there issues some thinker or scientific discoverer, who "provides a new organ for the human spirit" and lifts the thought of the world to a higher plane. While there have seldom been wanting men, engaged in actual university teaching, who belonged to the first rank, it yet is true that the work by which they have made their impress upon the world has lain apart from their professional labours. What, then, is the special function of the university? Its function is, in a word, to educate or teach. Now, the accumulating mass of literature dealing with the problem of education—wherein it consists, what is the best method, what are the proper subjects with which it deals, and what is its influence upon society—this increasing volume of educational literature is enough to show that the question, What is education? is by no means so simple as it may seem to be. We may say at once that education, the special function of the university, does not consist in imparting "useful information." No doubt an acquaintance with facts is always of value, and no one can be called educated who does not possess the average amount of information, without which he cannot be a good citizen. But it is not the end of the university simply to impart such information. If that were really its end, we should be launched upon what Aristotle would call an "infinite series." It is useful to know the construction of the thermometer, the pump, and the steam engine; it is useful to be able to read or speak Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, and even Chinese; but if one is to master all these subjects, along with the multifarious facts which are, in one way and another, "useful," where shall we begin, and where shall we