

no need that a minister should have a set of smooth and peaceful circumstances; no need that he should be rich, or famous; no need that he should live long; there is only need that he should speak out the message God has given him; only need that he should take hold of right and stand to it, saying, like stout Martin Luther, "I can no other, God help me;" there is only need that he win the favour of heaven on his good and faithful work. The true minister will strive to give to those who hear him a just idea of God, not always after their thought, but always according to his own. He will say to the people, "God is all power, and all wisdom, and all goodness. He is not to be conceived of by you, as the moral chancellor of the realm holding a bankrupt humanity to all that is written in the bond. God is not a king, great and terrible, whose sceptre is a rod of iron. He is a Father, infinite in power, in wisdom and in love. His goodness rays out in all directions, seeking to touch and bless the all of things. He is a Father—take all you know of good in human fatherhood; all its tenderness of care, all its patience when the prodigal is wandering, all its readiness to forgive, all its joy when he returns, and all that and more God is to the sons of men. He gave His Son in human form to human life and work, to sorrow and sacrifice and death, not because He was so angry or so careful to have justice done, not to incline His heart to the sinful of the earth, but that the power of sin might be broken and man be rescued from evil. He gave His Son to the world not to save the integrity of His moral government, but to save the souls of men by winning them back to God. The work of Christ has gone down to the very roots of all life; it is higher than heaven, it is deeper than hell; it prevails in time, it prevails in eternity, its centre is everywhere, its circumference is nowhere, and it is living bread for all who hunger, living waters for all who thirst, life for all the dead. Man came from the hand of God in purity and beauty. God is the author of every spirit, and each bears the image of his Maker. Man is not sent into the world totally depraved, evil only in every limb of his body and every faculty of his mind, but with tendencies to good and tendencies to evil, and a free will to choose either. And each has chosen evil, sinning against himself, against his brother-man and against his God. But Christ has redeemed him by living in love and holiness and self-denial, and dying in will-

ing sacrifice for him: and since the glad tidings have sounded forth "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The things of life—the good and the evil thereof—are being over-ruled by a loving Providence for man's eternal welfare. God made the world to bless it; His purposes and plans are all for good; sorrow and pain and death are but ministering angels. But, let no man hide the secret thought in his heart that in the love and mercy of God, in the work and dying of Jesus Christ, he will find immunity from the consequences of his sins. Do wrong in any way—defraud a brother, devour a widow's house, betray the confidence of man or woman, live in sin against God, secret or declared, deny his right to your love and obedience—and not your office in the Church, not your after-works of faith, not your prayers and tears of penitence can save you from the punishment that is due. Evil is not absolute, but it is an inviolable law of the universe that "whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." Such is the message I purpose to deliver. I have not given the whole of it, but just the whole in outline as to doctrines. But it seems to me that the minister's work is less than half done when he has declared, as best he knows how, the true idea as to God and Christ and man. Correctness of life is vastly more important than correctness of creed. It is better to have a wrong idea than to do a wrong act. Religion, as I understand it, consists of these two—inward sentiment and outward conduct—good living as the result of good thought and feelings. Religion cannot be built up in a creed—it cannot be held in separation from the thought of the mind, the feelings of the heart, the word of the lips and the work of the hands—it cannot be held in perfect form as sincere sentiment, or expressed by a ceremony. It cannot be worn as an amulet around the neck. It is a sacred fire in the heart, making pure every passion—making noble every motive—ennobling all the man, and all the work of every day, bracing the nerves to the robustness of manly achievement. Christianity is essentially a moral religion. It doesn't lay stress upon any one virtue, but upon all virtues—the great things of life and the small things are to be approached in the same lofty spirit of piety. It sets more store on *being* than on *seeming*; more on the love that gives a cup of cold water than on the long prayers of a bearded Rabbi. It requires faith first, and then looks for just and beautiful works.