

He will turn a deaf ear to them, unless persuaded to do otherwise by his human mother? No, the thought is refuted and condemned by every word and act of His earthly career. The testimony even of His bitter enemies was, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them"; and innumerable instances appear on the surface of the record of His life where he did so. And His own declaration is, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"; "I came to seek and to save the lost"; "Come unto me, and whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Why then, I say again, should we come into bondage to any class of men who claim that they must intervene between us and the One who thus graciously calls us to Himself? For the honor of our Blessed Redeemer, and in vindication of our own rights, let us repel and resist to the utmost this invasion of our freedom.

(4) Are we commanded by men to supplement the great atoning sacrifice of Christ as the ground of our justification before God, the procuring cause of eternal life, by our own good works, the merits of saints, and the endurance of purifying pains in eternity? Then, in the name of truth and on the testimony of God's Word, let us reject such counsel. The sacrifice offered *once for all* is infinitely sufficient as our passport to glory. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin; and no stain of defilement is left to be wiped out in eternity by fires, or prayers, or any other process.

I submit these points as instances, and there are many more of a similar nature, in which our personal freedom in Christ may be encroached upon, in which it has been encroached upon, in the case of millions, by the doctrines and commandments of men. In all such cases we are to disobey them. We are bound to assert our personal freedom, our right of private judgment; and in doing so our true attitude is to cling resolutely to the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles. We must, in fidelity to Him, and in vindication of our manhood, hold fast and hold forth the Word of life. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to His Word, it is because there is no light in them.

II. SOCIAL FREEDOM.

We have time now for only a few words on the social aspect of freedom. In this broader sense, when masses of men are concerned, wherein does it consist? Negatively, in exception from arbitrary, despotic, or autocratic control, especially in civil matters. Positively, it consists in the exercise, without molestation, of the right of private judgment and the right of free speech in the press and on the platform, in regulating our own affairs and those of the community and nation in which all are mutually concerned, the right of the free use of our property, or the products of our labour, subject at all times to certain well-known legal limitations and restrictions essential to the existence and well-being of society. In other words, the peaceful enjoyment of what the great English jurist, Blackstone, denominated the absolute and subordinate rights of men set forth and secured by *Magna Charta* and the Act of *Habeas Corpus* and the fundamental principles of the British Constitution. These are of perennial value to our nation and to the community of nations.

"For what avail the plough or soil,
Or land or life, if freedom fall."

And it is well, in these days of unrest and agitation, to grasp firmly first principles: for

there is a true Christian socialism which is being lost sight of, and which should ever be maintained and distinguished from theories and practices of designing demagogues which are utterly false and to be reprobated.

Many elements of the true view were advanced and advocated in England about the year 1850, under the leadership of Charles Kingsley, Frederick D. Maurice, Thomas Hughes and others, not that I am prepared by any means to endorse all that they pleaded for.

They were right, however, and in line with what I have sought to teach this afternoon, in holding that Christianity, in relation to the social fabric, is something far more real and spiritual than a huge politico-religious system of stately formalities, that it should be carried into everyday life, and be applied with vital controlling force to all forms of human activity; that its power should be felt in regulating the production and distribution of all commodities for the use of society; that all men and nations should act as brothers in the one universal family; that the Christian household should be the unit and model of the social compact, that the strife between capital and labour should be terminated by acting on the one principle which John Locke, long ago, recognized as sufficient for the settlement of all social questions, namely, that we should love our neighbors as ourselves.

Then let the State be asked to make void all legislation hostile to this position, and to enact, from time to time, such regulations as shall effectually restrain individuals and corporate bodies from injuring and crushing one another.

There can be no doubt that such teaching is wholesome, and aims at what is to be realized when the reign of righteousness and true freedom is established. But this is to be brought about by the enjoyment and persistent exercise of personal freedom as already explained. Let each individual experience the liberty which I have defined, and act accordingly, and their social relations are at once equitably adjusted.

In other words, let master and servants, landlords and tenants, rulers and ruled, become actuated by the spirit and conformed to the example of Him who said: "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," and all the vexing problems of modern Sociology are solved.

But, as I have said, this line of teaching and action is widely separated from what is clamoured for by many social reformers and atheistic and anti-Christian freethinkers of our day. They would overthrow the present social order, regardless of equity and freedom. As John Milton expressed it,—

License they mean when they say *liberty*;
For who has that must first be wise and good.

I believe that to place social freedom in our great land upon a strong and lasting basis, what is needed is not more machinery and novel methods of municipal and national government, but a return to the fountain of truth and wisdom, the Word of God, a deeper acquaintance on the part of all with its great ethical principles, a fuller appreciation of the elementary distinction between right and wrong, a deeper sense of the guilt and shame of lies and rognery and robbery in places of public trust, and, withal, the fearless manifestation of a spirit of Christian patriotism which will hurl from power those who prove themselves unworthy, and call to rule men of tried integrity who will stand fast in the freedom wherewith Christ has made them free, and refuse to be entangled again in a yoke of bondage.