

dogs, whose proper place was without. Christ looking on that said to the Pharisees: "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." The low were pressing in, the high were kept out; society was turned upside down—the order was reversed; crowds of prodigals were returning, and the Kingdom of God was full of joy. I need do no more than remind you that every great religious revival has been characterised by the same features. The leaders and teachers in the Church—those who have appeared most anxious for revival; those who have longed and languished most for the coming of a new and great man, have been left outside the movement. While the poor, passionate, and vulgar people seized hold of the new force which had begun to move in the general life of society, the cultivated, the members of the Church, the full-grown sons of orthodoxy, stood by in cold, contemptuous criticism.

How are we to account for that? and what does it mean? In answer, I will venture upon one particular statement, which I hope will not be misunderstood, it is this:—The perversion of the higher faculties in man is more fatal to moral excellence—that is, to religious life, than a grosser kind of depravity; men who have yielded to the brutal instincts of their nature are more likely to receive impressions and impulses from the Spirit of God than the men who have yielded to the selfishness of the intellect, and the conceit of a high and dry morality. That is a statement which may be easily misunderstood, and I want to make it plain and practical. We know very well that Christ did not glorify sin. The publicans and sinners found no apologist in Him; He made no excuses for the passionate outbursts of their ungoverned natures; it was only when that strong and passionate nature turned from sin and took hold of the Kingdom of God that He spoke a benediction upon them. The agony of remorse which the famine-stricken, dying prodigal suffered in the far away land is brought out in bold, strong colours. That woman who was a sinner got from His lips encouragement only in the way of "sin no more." Remember this; the Church had by common and unanimous consent banned and damned a certain class of sins; the sins of the lower nature; the sins of the brute man. Christ said: Yes; those excesses are sins against man and God; but, you church members; you formalists; you moralists; you men of oral laws and traditions, of long prayers and loud professions, you have no more a vital religion than they have; you are outside of the Kingdom of God as surely as they are; *you* must be born again as surely as they must. And the difference is that your kind of sin, because it works among the higher faculties, is more fatal to the moral nature than theirs. When the delirium of gross appetite is over, the sinner is liable to a sense of shame and pain; he feels that he has degraded himself; he is unsatisfied, and all his higher nature calls for bread to eat; but you Pharisees have no hours of delirium; no great storms sweep through you, spreading manifest ruin; you are Pharisees by nature and by education; you have no strong temptations down on the plane of the appetites, but you have done what is more fatal to the moral perceptions—you have perverted your minds and reversed God's moral order; you have exalted yourselves and called it humility; you have called falsehood truth, stealing honesty, and a mere outward appearance, religion. You are right according to your own judgment and reason and conscience; you have perverted the intellect; you have believed a lie. So satisfied are you that you have sight that you offer to lead others, and all the time you are blind. You are hard; you are cold; you are conceited; you are covetous, and all these vices you have baptized in the name of great virtues; the "publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you."

Now, I can understand that reasoning, I think, for it is a true analysis of our nature. A perverted intellect is worse than perverted affections. "The corruption of the best is the worst," as the old proverb has it, and upon the strength of Christ's teaching, I venture the statement that a man of immoral life may very well be nearer God and heaven, a likelier subject for the working of God's Spirit than many a hard, cold, church member of to-day.

For, on the whole, the Church of our time differs only in a few features—where difference is inevitable, because of changed times and circumstances—from the Church when Christ came preaching in the highways and synagogues. Civilized society is divided into Pharisees and Publicans as the two great divisions; of course, the Pharisees have their scribes as ever—that is, the scribes of Christ's time answer to the clergymen of this day as to office, and not to the lawyers, as we have sometimes been told; and, of course, there are schools outside of both these parties. We in the church have our creeds, our oral traditions which are dear to us; the Church is the great critic of all life, the standard of all morality. By unanimous consent we have judged that people guilty of gross animal sins shall have no place among us. It was not difficult to arrive at that decision, nor is it difficult to maintain it. But from my heart, I believe that if Christ were to come to earth again He would stand outside of all the churches, and perhaps, denounce the most orthodox of us for our pride and hypocrisy. How many among us would be prepared to welcome new ideals of life, new thoughts and methods of working? how many among us would endure the volcanic outburst of great revolutionary forces in our Church? how many can tolerate a violation of the conventional, or the disturbance of what is settled? Not many. But apart from that, and on more substantial grounds, I do not think I hazard much or leave much to conjecture when I say that I

believe Christ would stand outside of all the churches if He were to come to earth again. I am far from saying that there are not good, even great men, in the Church. I know there are men strong in faith; beautiful in virtue; tender and true. But as a system, what have we? As the Pharisees did, so do we. We have shut our doors against the grossly immoral; sins of the appetites we cannot and will not tolerate. And that is right. I am not complaining of that. But what I am sure of is that we tolerate sins of the higher faculties; sins which pervert the intellect, and destroy the conscience, and are fatal to all the moral nature. Here is a good illustration of what I mean. A certain man in a certain town was a member of a certain church. He was an active helper and a liberal contributor. But his secular calling was one that if it did not presuppose a grasping dishonesty, was certainly likely to help in sin a man predisposed to making money. The member I have mentioned was understood to have had the predisposition, and to have trained it into a fixed habit of life. But, still he was regarded as a very creditable member of the church; hard, covetous, over-reaching, ready to advance his own gain at any man's loss; often having the chance and always using it; grinding the face of the unfortunate with the devil's own coolness; but the Church had no reprimand, and no censure for him, except what came in a general way from the pulpit. But by and by another appetite broke out, ungovernable for a time. The man drank to excess. It was a grave scandal, the church was shocked. Again it came, the man was put under discipline, warned, and publicly prayed for. I am not excusing the drinking; it *was* a sin, and deserved all the punishment; but, what of the other sins of long drawn out covetousness; of cheating for gain; of intense selfishness? What of that? the church had nothing to say. You will find that everywhere. Vulgar sins; street sins; sins of the lower passions we loudly condemn, but sins of the higher faculties; sins of selfishness working up in the intellect; working out in commerce; working to the degradation of politics; working by system and organization; calling fierce ambition by the sacred name of patriotism, and the most diabolical wrongs by the holy name of right; against them we have no discipline, no laws; no, or not much, denunciation. What thunders and lightnings we have for the profligate; the men who drink the colour from their cheeks, and the light from their eyes, and the strength from their lips, and drop paralysed into the grave? And while we are forging them, and launching them forth, formalists sit in the pew thinking and scheming how they may lie with most profit to-morrow; they have a mask for a face; a vulture for a heart; a calculating machine for a mind; the interest table is their creed, their paternoster and their decalogue; but they are reputable members of the church, and are held to be free from the law of condemnation.

I said Christ would probably stand outside of all the Churches if he were to come to earth again. If you doubt the correctness of that, just look at the nature of Christ's teaching. You will find that it ranges most among the higher faculties. He declared against sins of thought. He preached against covetousness, and that must be made to apply to all and every phase of life—life at home, life out in society, life in the market-place, life in political circles. His religion is one of deep, true brotherhood. It means that men shall be united, not because they happen to please each other and agree in intellectual matters, but because they know their high, deep, sacred relations to each other and to God—because they have a sentiment of kindness which has passed into a character of love. Would Christ find *that* among us? No. You and I know only too well how little the true sentiment of brotherhood prevails in the churches. We are divided upon intellectual grounds, upon mere traditions, upon ritual observances, upon ecclesiastical ordinances. Where is the spirit of mutual toleration? where is the charity that judges a brother kindly, thinking no evil and speaking no evil, and is blind to faults? Do you find it at work in the professedly Christian community? do you find it at church courts when a man's creed or character is on trial? I verily believe that many, if not most men to-day, would rather be tried on a point of character and good conduct by a jury of men of the world than by a jury of the church. The high and dry moralists, the slaves of shibboleth and routine, the men who have let the diabolical elements absorb the animal—how hard, and cold, and remorseless they are! how they can backbite! how they can hate! how they can persecute! No wonder that the great, true, gentle, brotherly Christ—whose heart was swelling with emotions of love to men—who was denying himself for love's sake, and would *die* for love's sake—no wonder that His anger kindled against the Pharisees, and that woes broke from his lips like great storms from the thunderous heavens!

But all in the Church when Christ came were not formalists and hypocrites. Many a true heart longed for the consolation of Israel, and many outside the pale had turned dull eyes to heaven seeking for the light. And so it is now. There are heroes of the faith, there are saints of God among us. To them and to others Christ is speaking. I believe that we are on the eve of a great spiritual revolution. Our ecclesiastical garments are old and worn out. There is a movement toward a truer intellectual and heart-life, and the new thought and the new sentiment will burst the old bottles. Let us take hold of this life which has come to us, brothers. We may let all that is good and true in life be put under the passions if we will, but that means death. We may let the devil work among our higher faculties until we are persuaded that covetousness