

tially Christian. They are pagan forms of social crystallization, with a thin gilded veneer of Christianity. They have Christ's religion with the bottom fallen out. They spend oceans of money in satisfying their own pious sensibilities with fine preaching, exquisite music, and solemn architecture, and yet wonder that they make no converts. They do not touch social sores, and do little or nothing to change for the better the character of the city in which we live. They are splendid illustrations of refined, pious selfishness. The world sees through it all and turns infidel.

The minister or church that pursues this policy may meet with swift-footed success. At the end of a year or two the pastor will be made glad by seeing before him a large audience, and the church officers will have no ugly deficit to wrestle with. But the very swiftness of your success awakens your misgivings. You begin to be suspicious of so speedy a victory. You recall St. John's profound generalization—*we know that the whole world lieth in the wicked one*—and you wonder that, with this environment, the Church of Christ should advance with such long, easy strides. You begin to ask yourself the question that fell from the lips of the aged patriarch Isaac, when his younger son undertook to palm himself off as the elder, and spread before him the savory but premature dish of venison: "*How is it thou hast found it so quickly, my son?*" You proceed to analyze the audience that you have gathered, and you discover that it is made up of individuals who were good church-going people before. You explore the ecclesiastical pedigree of those who fill your pews, and you find that they are *registered*. You have only succeeded in getting a handful here and a handful there, from this church and from that. There is no production of new material. It is a mere sleight-of-hand performance. It is as when you turn a kaleidoscope and the same identical pieces of glass shift and only form a new combination. You have really made no impression upon the great non-church-going mass. The acute pleasure you experience in seeing so many people in your church is a good deal mitigated by the thought that another minister, here and there, is correspondingly depressed by observing their absence from his. Many a so-called successful church is built up at the expense of a score of feebler ecclesiastical growths. Is there in this any real gain to the cause of Christ in the world?

It is the duty of the Church, then, not to turn itself into a travelling show, but to stick to its field, provided humanity is there, no matter how degraded and unresponsive. Let it change not its *place*, but its *methods*, gearing itself anew for the kind of people God sends. Let it cling at least to the edges of our social swamps. The only way in which the ignorant and vicious will ever be improved is by close contact with the intelligent and the pure, who shall come among them in the spirit of the One that laid His glory by and took upon Himself the form of a slave. The Church cannot lift the masses at arm's length. Her methods too often remind us of the grim, heartless joke perpetrated on us in our boyhood when we fell