

or redemption? The end of our system should not be vindictive justice; it should be *redemption*. We shall not complete it, it is true, until God has finished his redeeming work, and all his children stand before his throne, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; with no avarice or hate or passion or bitterness in their hearts. Not until then shall we complete our redemptive work; but meanwhile we can work with our God toward it, having for our object and end, kept constantly in view, not the protection of society, not the reformation of single individuals, but the *redemption* of society from the contamination of crime.

In the third place, we are not to accomplish this end by the deterrent power of fear. Fear has its place in our reformatory methods, but fear is not the great method for the world's redemption from wrong-doing. There was a time when men consistently believed that the world was to be protected and crime was to be checked and prevented by the deterrent power of fear. The punishments then inflicted were inflicted before the eyes of men, that they might see the horror and start back from the evil forces that led to it. Why is it that we cast the veil that we now cast before all public punishments? Why is it that no pillory stands before our church, that our children may see the criminal in the stocks and take warning from the example? Why is it that no chain-gang breaks stone upon our streets and sidewalks, that our children may look upon the edifying example and be deterred from crime by seeing it? Why is it that ladies and gentlemen no longer travel across the country, as they did in the reign of Charles the Second, that they may look upon the whip laid upon the back of the criminal, and learn that the way of the transgressor is hard? Why is it that the gallows is no longer erected in the public square that the execution may be a public spectacle? Why? Because we are learning that there is not a deterrent power in the infliction of punishment to keep people back from crime; because we are learning that the infliction of penalty hardens the heart of the on-looker and does not turn him from vice to virtue. Even in our schoolrooms, when the rod is used by the teacher, it is used in the privacy of a single room, and not before the pupils. God himself allows no gnashing of teeth, no cry or groan of despair, to reach our ears from his own dread prison-house. He suffers us to know that there is, in that dim, dark future, an unknown and mysterious penalty; but no eye looks upon it, and no heart knows what it is. He hides his punishments from the human soul.

I venture to say that punishment never reforms a wrong-doer. Punishment holds back the wrong-doer for a time, that other remedial agents may be brought to bear upon him, but he is set free from sin not by the power of fear, but by the power of a new life. All pagan religions seek to conquer men by the power of fear. Set up in your pulpit here an idol from any pagan land and marvel at his hideousness. The priests make their idols most horrible in appearance, but they have constructed them with wisdom. They are constructed to terrify men from wrong-doing. The Gospel of Jesus Christ brings to us a different conception of the way in which men are to be set right. The remedy is new life. The power of the Gospel is the power of an endless life. "We are saved by hope," is the word written over the portal of every one of Christ's true churches. Hope, faith, love—these are the ministers by which we are elevated and by which we are to redeem society from those that are its foes. We are not merely to protect ourselves from evil; we are to *overcome* evil; and we are to overcome it, not chiefly by the power of penalty, but by good.

Is this our method? Do we even approximate it? Are we trying to redeem society from crime? Are we trying to consider our criminal classes and to reclaim them by the power of love? Let me narrate the history of a boy, a history that is re-enacted in almost every village of the land every year. He has been brought up by an idle, dissolute, drunken, dishonest father. He has learned dishonesty from his babyhood. He has grown wild and dissolute. He has known no other remedy than his father's rod in moments of hot passion. At last, in some freak of mischief or malice or passion or revenge, he transgresses all bounds, and a citizen, out of all patience with him, sends the constable after him. He is tried before the magistrate. Society takes him in hand and attempts to adjust the penalty to the crime. It makes no inquiry as to the nature, the education, the temptation of this boy. What is it going to do with him? Is it going to put him where he is to be educated for temperance, for honesty, for righteousness? It puts him in a county jail. And what is a county jail? I read a graphic description of this primary school in crime from a recent article by General Brinkerhoff, published in the *Congregationalist* last winter:

"To establish a school of crime requires (1) teachers skilled in the theory and practice of crime; (2) pupils with inclination, opportunity, and leisure to learn; (3) a place of meeting together. All these requirements are provided and paid for by the public, in the erection, organization, and equipment of county jails and city prisons. With less than half a dozen exceptions, all the jails and city prisons in the United States are schools of this kind, and it is difficult to conceive how a more efficient system for the education of criminals could be devised. . . . Every observant jailer knows with what devilish skill the professors of this school ply their vocation. Hour after hour they beguile the weariness of enforced confinement with marvellous tales of successful crime, and the methods by which escape has been accomplished. If attention fails, games of chance, interspersed with obscene jokes and ribald songs, serve to amuse and while away the time. In this way the usual atmosphere of a jail is made so foul that the stamina of a saint are scarce strong enough to resist. Let a prisoner attempt to be decent, and to resist the contaminating influences brought to bear upon him, especially in a large jail, and he will find that, so far as personal comfort is concerned, he might as well be in a den of wild beasts."

This is what we are doing in New York, in Ohio, in Massachusetts, in almost every State of this Union, with our young criminals. After thirty days in school, he goes out, and is sent back to his father. His pride, his vanity, his self-esteem, have all been wrought upon on the side of vice and iniquity. He has been taught how he may be a criminal and escape detection. All his hate has been aroused against society, which he regards as a tyrant and an oppressor. He has been an apt pupil in this school. He commits another offence, is arrested again, and sent back to school once more, as if he had not learned enough. That operation is repeated half a dozen times, until he is at last sent to a State prison. And now what has he? A clean prison, good fare, good clothing; well-administered, reasonable justice; no severe punishments if he fairly behaves himself. These evils have, as I take it, been fairly swept away from the State prison. But what, in its essential character, is a modern State prison? A factory of compulsory labour, organized by the State for the purpose of making money, in which slaves are set to servile toil that they may earn a few dollars and pay them into the treasury of the State, under a contractor whose interest it is to multiply criminals, because in multiplying criminals he multiplies his own labourers, under a warden who may do all that a single individual can, but who, do what he may, struggles against the aroused and criminal hate of those within, and the more criminal indifference of the community without. And

when at last the now confirmed criminal comes out from his State prison, after two, three, five, ten years, and goes back into society again, every door to useful industry, every honorable vocation, is shut and barred against him. He can more easily break into your house with a jimmy than he can get into it through the front door. He can more easily take money out of your drawer than he can win it by your goodwill. I am not blaming you. I would not take a thief into my house and risk my wife and my children. I am blaming the whole system of punishment for which you and I are responsible. It is wrong in its three essential and fundamental principles; wrong in its idea, wrong in its object, wrong in its methods. Over against them I set the three fundamental principles of the Gospel: grace, not justice, the idea; redemption, not protection, the aim: faith, hope, and love, not fear, the method. In all our methods of prison reform, in all changes of prison discipline, of criminal law, and of criminal administration, we are struggling, consciously or unconsciously, blindly or intelligently, understandingly or without understanding, toward a system which shall incarnate these three great principles in our social order: against vindictive justice, redemptive grace; against protection of society, the redemption of society; against the deterrent power of fear, the inspiring power of a new life.

Do we realize that in God's sight we are all criminals? Do we realize that we are all under God's condemnation? that no one of us could stand before him on the plane of vindictive justice? that every one of us needs forgiveness and redeeming grace? Do we realize that this world, bright as it is with all its forms of beauty, and all its wonderful displays of life, is but God's great reformation, where he is holding those that are law-breakers against his law and love, that he may deal with them, not as they deserve, but as he delights. And on what principle does he deal with us breakers of his law? No palliation of our sins, no explanation of them, no patting and smoothing pity, making light of them, no sentimental talk of "victims" and "unfortunates." A deep, earnest, strong recognition of the sinfulness of sin, written again and again and again all over the pages of his Bible, written with letters of fire all over the leaves of our conscience. Inexorable law—law that never deviates from its purpose; law that goes straight to its mark as an arrow from the bow; law that will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left; law that carries penalty with it to every deliberate, persistent, wilful wrong-doer—with the great background of mysterious penalty in the far-off future to those that will not be reclaimed. But, with all that, a world of beauty and of light, a world full of beckonings to temperance, purity, virtue, uprightness, in which all life is calling us to goodness and to truth; a world to which God has sent his only begotten Son to suffer and to die, a crowned King whose crown is of thorns, and whose sceptre is like the sceptre of the Eastern monarch of old, held out to the suppliant who comes to touch it, that he may lay hold upon it, and live. Evermore the same lips which proclaim a message of redemption proclaim our ordination to redeeming work; the same lips which bear to us the message of hope, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," proclaims also the message of duty: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; as the Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you into the world;" while from his apostle, as the earthly response of an inspired messenger, accepting for himself and interpreting to others the spirit of the divine embassy, comes the motto of all redeeming work: "Overcome evil with good."