

in the mind, troubling the judgment, puzzling the will, leaving the unanchored life without chart, compass, or steersman at the mercy of every impetuous current and perilous squall. A life without definite views and settled convictions is apt to become the plaything of circumstances, and the ready victim of that deterioration of character that is the natural tendency of a life that is without the restraints of religious obligation and the elevating stimulus of an immortal hope.

Now let me put into straight and simple form the main questions which I have found more or less definitely influencing working men, as I have gone in and out among them, not only in parochial ministrations, but in lectures, discussions, etc. And I shall try to answer these questions with frank and fraternal sympathy and on broad practical grounds.

"Why should I be religious? If I look after 'No. 1,' mind my own business, do my duty, can't I get on just as well without religion as with it?" "As to Christianity, it is only one of many religions; how much better is it than the others?" "What has Christianity ever done for the working man? Christianity may do very well for the *classes*, but of what practical use is it to the *masses*?" "There are so many mysteries in religion; and how can a man accept what he can't understand?" "There are so many differences of sects and opinions in religion, how is a man to choose which is right?" "There is such a lot of hypocrisy and humbug in religion, Christians that profess one thing and practise another, how is a man to know what is genuine and what is false?" "The present brings so many toils and cares, that I must wait till I have more convenient time to think of the future."

Now let us consider together candidly these very practical questions and objections.

1. "Why should I be religious? If I look after 'No. 1,' mind my own business and do my duty, can't I get on just as well without religion as with it?" No, you cannot. It is impossible. You cannot fulfil your life, attain to the best standard of a man's growth apart from religion. There are depths in the human soul that give responsive echo to no voice but the voice of religion; energies that it only can awaken; possibilities of joyful present possession

and of ennobling anticipation of which religion alone holds the "open secret." In short, there are occasions in life, and those among its gravest and most trying experiences, when, if religion were dumb, there would be no voice to solace and to cheer the weary and wounded heart. If religion were but a dream, life would be a despair. "No. 1" is a much larger quantity than they are apt to imagine who often use so glibly this familiar phrase. "No. 1" is the entire self of a man; and its proper care includes his body with its material needs and well-being, his mind and its right employment and improvement, his character, what it may and should be, he being a man and no meaner thing. "No. 1" is indeed the factor that represents that entire and complex being, the individual human life, with its many sides and many needs. The first and due care of "No. 1" is the unavoidable and responsible stewardship of personal manhood. So, then, a man cannot even "mind his own business" if he is neglecting his true welfare, and those important things that concern the "profit" and progress of himself. A man's life is no petty huckster's shop dealing in the small wares of mere material and temporary needs. The business of a man's life, truly understood, is a vast concern. It holds commerce with all the hunger of human life, its deep and varied needs, and there comes within the scope of its traffic a possession, "profitable unto all things," "for the merchandise of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."

A man, therefore, is not doing and cannot "do his duty" to himself even, if he is not making the most and best of himself. But "none of us liveth unto himself." We cannot, if we would, live morally apart from our surroundings. The electrician can charge his Leyden jar, and placing it on a glass-legged stool, he insulates the electric energy till the proper conductor is applied; but there is no apparatus of moral insulation. The energy of our personal influence, of whatever sort and strength it is, is being given off despite ourselves. A man's duty, therefore, extends of necessity beyond "No. 1." Himself is not his sole concern. He is in debt to Society. He owes duty to wife and child, parent and friend, and to that wide social confederation of which he is a brother. But if a man is not living a true life, self-restrained, pure, gentle, good—thinking the best he knows and aiming at the