

in all the world around them wrong working at cross purposes. It was not simply that the two great principles of right and wrong were in conflict, but wrong was divided and subdivided, and every separate interest was working against every other separate interest. The age witnessed nothing so much as a mad contest of devils. Mind, conscience, reason,—everything, was put under the dominance of brute force. No sooner was one kind of wickedness triumphant than another form more powerful than that was invented, and so constant appeal was made to Beelzebub, the Prince of devils. The Scribes and the common people were perfectly familiar with the idea that a higher kind of evil is often put into operation to crush a lower kind. The change is not in the way of goodness, and is not intended to be in the way of goodness, but simply that power may change centres.

Precisely the same thing has happened since and is happening now. It may be stated as a fact that men are trying to cast out devils by the prince of devils. Take the history of the Church as an example to begin with. Every page of that history bears the record of some unbrotherly contest. The chapters are not of hard-fought fields where faith triumphed over unbelief, and holiness over-mastered sin of thought and speech and act; but they tell how men have racked the intellect for subtleties of logic—how they have invented pains for the mind, and pains for the body, as punishment for all considered recreant. When the Church banned men from her pale, forbidding all privileges of fellowship because they doubted her dogmas, what was that in spirit but trying to cast out devils through Beelzebub? When she invented the unholy Inquisition, searching with a fierce light into the secret depths of men's thoughts; by fiendish tortures compelling them to invent and speak falsehoods as to their own beliefs, what was that but casting out devils by Beelzebub? When because some members of the Christian community learn to think a little differently as to matters of belief, and to act a little differently as to matters of organization, and that change is called schism, and is met with hardness and coldness and no forbearance—with lofty disdain and uncompromising hostility, what is that but a palpable effort to cast out devils by the prince of devils? To evoke the operation of any power but that of love in the Church; to visit intellectual or merely formal delinquency with the refined persecutions at her command, is to do in spirit, if not in actual letter, what the Scribes charged Christ with doing. For the Church to attempt to hinder or destroy vagrancy of thought or laxity of morals by the setting up of false lights, by the invention of dogmas which tend to degrade man's conception of God—to make him fear where he should love, and tremble when he should pray in faith, is for it to work by and with the most powerful kind of wickedness it can find. You see that there is plenty of scope here for generalising, and ample opportunity for personal and practical application. The first would mean passing under review and criticism a good many of our doctrines; and the second would mean an examination of all the shameful persecutions to which the Church at different times has lent herself, as well as many of the less notable, but no less painful, and diabolical scenes, we still are called upon to witness or to suffer.

But we shall find quite as many, and perhaps quite as practical illustrations of it in the world of politics. There is no need to go far back in history, for as a matter of fact, until a comparatively recent period, politics were conducted without any pretence of piety. But in these last days it became fashionable to base every selfish and avaricious move of nations and men upon something that is made to look like a virtue. Russia for a century and more had burned to be revenged upon the Turk for old time cruelties and spoliations. Still more did she want to get back that city which was at once the key to her position and the jewel to her crown, Constantinople; but not daring to avow the true motive, she found a pretext for war in some petty persecutions at Jerusalem. England, jealous of the growing power of Russia, and believing that any extension toward Asia Minor or India would imperil "British interests," cried aloud for fairness and longer life for an old and chivalrous nation bowing down to the Crescent, and sent her fleet to Besika Bay. Prince Bismarck having fought Roman Catholicism with tooth and nail, and might and main, found that the Pope could be of some service by exercising his spiritual authority to put down some unruly civil elements, and the Prince made friends with the Pope, declaring his deep veneration for religion. The British Cabinet, anxious to do something brilliant, so as to recover some lost ground in popular esteem, obtained consent from Russia to make war upon the Afghans, but said the reason was: first, to help the cause of Afghan morals and manners; second, to set up a barrier against Russian aggression in India; and third, to secure a "scientific frontier." Sir Bartle Frere at the Cape, representing the Queen and British civilization, and in an indirect way, British religion, because he had presided at Exeter Hall May meetings, saw that Zulu heathendom was intolerable alongside of British civilization, and made demand of Cetewayo that he be born again of orders from the Plenipotentiary of England, which being refused, a cruel and disastrous war was forced upon the unreasonable heathens, which ended in favour of the drilled battalions and civilization and British religion; although none of us can see now why the war should have taken place, or what good has come of it. But that is in big just what is happening every day around us. Politicians range among the lower passions of men; then some others find a way of using a higher and more powerful form of evil; and so the promise leads to no per-

formance; the hope is created and deferred until the heart is sick; the strong evil overcomes the weaker, and is in turn overcome by a stronger, and men are trying to cast out lesser devils by the Prince of the power of the air.

It would be easy to illustrate this from the world of commerce. You know how it is practised—how forms of evil are invented, each stronger than the other, each more refined than the other, each more diabolical than the other; but I want to pass on and notice for a minute the great dictum of the Son of Man, that this policy can only fail and bring destruction. The verdict of all history is against it. Go into a library and take down volume after volume giving you the words and works of men, and what do you find there? why, the tragic story of bright hopes brought to nothing; powers built up by force and rotted down by pride and selfishness; man making of man an instrument of ambition or covetousness; evil taking great leaps upward, but always falling back to earth again to lie and bleed and groan, until galvanized into fresh hope and effort by some more masterful power of mischief. There has been no working upward, only a working downward, until it may be hazarded as a statement, without much fear of contradiction, that never had the prince of devils so complete a control of the politics and commerce of the world as now. What keen competition there is between parties and partizans! what false promises are made! what hypocrisies are invented! what organizations of falsehoods we have! In business it *was* competition, making more and greater demands upon the working hand and the thinking brain. But now it is not competition in business so much as the rivalry of men to outdo each other and make a profit out of fraud. We are trying to cast out devils by the prince of devils; we have reached the highest possible form of evil; every force of nature we can utilize—the current of electricity; the modes of rapid transit; the subtleties of art and science are all laid under direct contribution for the promotion of personal ends. But there are evident signs that this divided house cannot stand. The walls of the devil's temple are rent from top to bottom, and the storm of God's wrath is rattling on the shaking roof. Men are growing weary of the devilry that has got into politics and trade; the struggles of manifold forms of evil have induced a weariness of flesh and spirit and a longing to return to the calmer ways of righteousness. This competition of devilries is ruining the world, and men know it. Sinful works are based on weakness, and run off to waste. Evil is self-destructive; and although each form may be superseded by some more powerful form, the end of the strongest is only a question of time.

It is a settled fact, then—known to us not simply because we have it on Christ's authority, but because all history and experience bear witness to it—that only when goodness is the inspiration and the ultimate aim can sin be mastered. As I have said, it is not hard to change the form of evil. You may teach men to change their sins and call it reformation; you may induce a man to control his lower passions by appeal to avarice or pride; you may induce a nation to give up the glory of wealth for the glory of war—just as you may turn a man ambitious for the power of money to ambition for the power of social or political position; but that is only to change the form of evil—it is not to destroy the works of the devil. That is to say: you may convert the publican into a Pharisee; you may take the mastery from the brute in man and give it to the fiend in man; but what have you accomplished? Less than nothing at all. It still holds good and true, that to cast out devils, to effect radical and lasting changes in men and in communities, they must be born of *water* and of the *Holy Ghost*. There must be a cleansing of the old, and a creation of what is altogether new and altogether good. The evil must be rooted out, and the good seed sown in the cleaned and fruitful soil. The fresh impulse must be from above and not from beneath; the increase of power must be a force that works for righteousness and toward God, the beginning and the term of all true life.

Now, there are two points of personal and practical application arising out of what I have said. The first concerns our own working. We are restless to make changes in the lives of others, and to experience changes in our own lives. Some of us are engaged in politics, some in literature, some in trade, and each exerts an influence upon others in those spheres. What we want to be sure of is, that the changes for which we work in ourselves and others have their first impulse as well as their final ending in goodness. When you stand up to advocate social revolutions, political revolutions, change of manners and methods of working and living, be sure that you are advocating the cause, not of this or that party in the State, which is only a compound of human pride and selfishness; be sure that you are not upholding what is at best a foolish prejudice; but be sure that your word and work are for truth, for man's truth and God's truth, for man's good and God's glory to all time and all eternity. Cast out devils when you can,—out of your own life, out of the lives of others, out of the Church, out of society, out of politics, out of business, out of the world; but seek inspiration and power in God. Work in faith, work in love, work in justice, work with an eye to the end and the judgment,—so shall you do great work and true work, and lasting work, bringing glory to God.

My second remark is this: Beware how you judge the men who are doing God's work in the world. There stood the Scribes, critical, cold, proud, loving their settled ways and old traditions, and fearing for nothing so much as their