

tion for Convicted Girls," "Adult Evening Schools," "Public Vaccination," etc., etc. The list might be indefinitely extended. But a glance at the subjects named, or, better still, a glance at the subjects discussed at any recent meeting of a social science congress, will, I venture to say, be to some a revelation of the extent of ground to be covered by social reform, not easily grasped. Many of these evils are the growth of years. Some appear in the changing phases of the modern civilization. Now the point made is this, that this is a subject on which, as a class, the Christian ministry ought to be specially well informed. They cannot get the knowledge by reading newspapers or reviews, or the novels of Charles Reade and Walter Besant attacking some of these evils. The requisite knowledge can be had in only one way, that is by study of social science. It is found in the investigations and discussions conducted by social science associations, or set on foot by them, and it exists nowhere else. That in such social reforms the Christian church should take a leading part cannot surely be questioned. Many of these touch deeply the interests of public morals. Some of them concern the purity and perpetuity of institutions like the family. Others certainly affect deeply the physical welfare of those classes society is bound to look after. The church cannot play the priest or the Levite's part in such matters. In fact, the problems involved grow more pressing as the modern civilization increases in its complexity, rendering the bare struggle for life more strenuous and desperate. To thoughtful minds matters wear a serious look. We may dismiss the theories of Mr. George as vagaries at war with sound political economy, with sound political ethics. We may grow hot with indignation over the diabolical schemes of anarchists, and fulminate against socialistic and communistic theories of social adjustment. But that some social reforms are needed, that our social system is out of joint, cannot be denied. Nor should we, nor need we, say with Hamlet—

"O cursed spite  
That ever [we were] born to set it right."

The Christian church should be a teacher in wise and just social reforms. And let the American church not forget our great and sad lesson in its recent history. The praise of having been the first to lead off in and the most resolute to persist in the anti-slavery reform does not belong to the Christian church. History will have to record that here she was not faithful to her high commission; that she halted when others advanced; that she was timid and bowed to money-power or political expediences, and that the real heroes of that great movement were men who, in some instances, went out of the church rather than be a party to her dilatory and vacillating policy. Let the lesson never be forgotten. Let the church of Christ be spared a second such disgrace.