

have little or no reality at all. The conventions of society furnish the external code for behaviour. To conform to the decrees of respectability, even when respectability is really respectable, may become mere formalism, and the power to aspire to the highest and the best, dissipated in a life of social slavery. The slavery of old had in it the possibility of heroism in the service of a worthy master, but the slavery to mundane and ephemeral convention, being self-imposed, partakes of the nature of suicide.

Lent calls us back to reality. The season is observed in commemoration of the traditional forty days spent by our Lord in solitude before entering upon His public ministry. It was a time of reflection and meditation. It was a time of intense spiritual struggle, for all the plausible devices which might bring Him success and renown were passed in review, and all were submitted to the final test of whether they would fulfil God's purpose for Himself and for mankind. He came out of the wilderness with the vision of His heavenly Father clear, with His knowledge of the Father's purpose deepened, and with His spirit fortified to face enemies at all the intersections where nationalistic ambitions and selfishness crossed the path of perfect filial obedience.

But the challenge of Lent is not merely the challenge of the results of His seclusion and meditation. It is also the