

Catholicism does not commend itself to the intellect, and Calvinism smites the heart into defiant rebellion. The day for both is gone. They still exist as forms—they have their temples, and their anthems, and their altars, and their creeds, and their hosts of worshippers—each has truth enough in it to keep it alive for a century more—but they do not exercise an influence as they once did. Roman Catholicism is the home of multitudes of women and children, and a few men who dream—and a few more who want to look after the present and let the priest see to the rest; but, as if conscious of its own weakness, it forbids its members to seek for a field for increase of light and knowledge. Calvinism has had to relax much of its harshness, coldness, in order to live in peaceful times, and now its logic is attacked in its strongest holds, and point after point of obstinate defence has been yielded. And when the earnest practical man has turned from these, what can he find? where can he find a religion that shall control head and heart, and eyes, and hands and feet? I confess to you that I know not where he can go. There is the Unitarian formula, which seeks to escape from logical contradictions by discarding the Athanasian creed—there is pro-Christianity, which seeks to escape from historical criticism by giving up the Bible as the word of God, and the scheme of redemption as the basis of its creed—and then come survivals of the bare old Deism—hypotheses of a divine abstraction—vague vapourings of the “eternals that make for righteousness”—a gospel of sweetness and light—a series of beatitudes for culture—a kingdom of heaven that has no king, no conscious willing subjects, no government, and no law—all a beautiful sentiment; and then come philosophical conundrums which veil theology in an impenetrable cloudland. But not one of these, and not all of these have a word to say to human nature—to practical thought and energy—to science and industrial life. And that is what has popularized this gospel of *laissez faire*. We can do nothing in these matters—we understand bread-winning—we understand domestic and political economy—we understand getting rich, or getting honours, or the gratification of the lower senses; but those other matters which are called higher we do not understand at all—let them alone. Things come bringing good or evil, peace or misery, and then go—let them come—let them go.

Is that a mere fatalism? a craven surrender to chance, sheer and blank and cowering atheism? Oh, no. It is not that at all. It is a sort of faith in God, even in a benificent God. Christian teaching during the many ages past has succeeded in making a general belief in God a very part of the mind. It has become a factor in all education; it has given to society its code of courtesy and laws of honour; it has diffused itself abroad, a subtle essence penetrating everywhere, impregnating the very air—so that the gospel of *laissez aller* (the idea that things had better be let alone) is the outcome of old faith, broken, pounded fine, and mixed with compounds from modern science and philosophies and follies.

That is the position of things as I see it. I am not speaking of men who live in cloistered contemplation, nor am I speaking of the few in our churches who devote their best gifts of thought and feeling and power to work to the upholding of their own character in the faith and righteousness of the Gospel of Christ. I am speaking of people as I find them in general—as they live and move and breathe in the work-a-day life of the world. What can we do then? Is there anything practical upon which we can lay our hand, any work of salvation to be done? Let us face and own the fact, that in spite of all we say men will take the direction of their lives in their own hands; they will order the working of their own energies, and they will maintain an interest, a supreme interest in the life that now is, under the condition that now is. And you cannot hinder each man from holding the belief that he himself is the centre of that interest; but he is sure, when in his right mind, that his personality is not to be at once the centre and circumference of his thought and work. He has an intellect ever at work to try and discover the hidden laws and relations of things; he has two sets of instincts, the one urging him to devote his energy to what is great, ennobled and ennobling; the other urging him to devote himself to what is low and debasing. The intellect will be just as willing to serve the mean instincts as the other and higher; the energy may be wasted in vain efforts or bad, destructive actions. All serious men, whatever their creed, are convinced that man's powers must be brought into truer relations with each other, and when they are harmonized the personal endeavour must be for the good of the whole. Politicians, thinkers, moralists, social economists—all profess to be working with that end in view. The conviction has been forced upon us that we must direct human energy, not stop it; we must cultivate the intellect, not crush it; we must accept truths of science and philosophy without minding our orthodox creeds over-much; we must recognize man's care for the earth, and his life upon it, and give him a religion that shall not make such tremendous demands upon his credulity, that if he confess a belief of it with his lips his reason is ashamed of the surrender—a religion that does not begin and end with the worship of a vague idea, exercising no influence upon the life—a theology which can give strong life to science, and inspiration to the search for knowledge—a theology for true life and a kingdom of heaven here. Yes; a kingdom of heaven here—nothing less; the exercise and administration of laws which shall bring men's varied

capacities and energies into working order; the operation of a force which shall make things go in the right way—a force which shall enable man himself to be an energy—a controlling, influencing energy. That is what men want and must have, and what we must give them, if Christianity is to maintain any hold upon the practical common sense of an educated world. It is a frenzy of insurrection against our vagueness, our unreality, the utter impracticability of nearly all our creeds that has taken for its watchword, “Let everything go its own way.” The old ideas of God, of Providence, of the Incarnation, of atonement, of eternities and absolute goodness and endless hell, have been slipping away from men in spite of all that we can do. After nineteen centuries of change and new adaptation the truth is borne in upon us with overwhelming force, that these things have been wholly unable to organize the intellectual and practical life of man; they have been gradually but surely growing more distinctly separate from human life, and men are now, for the most part, convinced that the theology of the churches cannot be brought into line with science and industry, and what they understand by worldly life. What does the ordinary individual make of all our teachings? Is he distinctly kind and generous to an enemy for love of Christ; does the precept of Sunday's psalm, and prayer, and sermon influence his dealings on Monday? Whoever heard of politicians demanding that right may be done though parties go to the wall? When Mr. Gladstone, awhile ago, appealed to the moral laws of the universe against what he deemed an evil policy, the half of Europe broke out in laughter. No one can tell, and few care to predict, what the end of all this is to be. Now and then some Cassandra comes forth to tell us of rocks ahead, but the prophet of evil, at any rate, has no honour in his own country and among his own kin. Politics are bad and getting worse—but, what will you? let things go. Commerce is immoral—but, let it alone. The popular mind has broken with theology—but, let things go. Keep on in the old humdrum way; you can't alter matters by fretting over them. And we are to blame for that, you and I, the church. The Protestants have had their syllabus and expurgatorium just as surely as the Vatican; we have basely hindered the free uprising of thought; we have tried to seal up the great fountains of knowledge; we have divorced religion from actual life, and made it a thing of inelastic beliefs and elastic emotions; we have banished heaven and hell away into the far-off future; we have filled them with flimsiest unrealities and most grotesque absurdities, and what wonder that the people say to us now: We don't wish to have a controversy with you; we have no desire to quarrel with you, or to insult you; you represent an ancient institution and most venerable traditions; we are quite willing to sign a contract of non-intervention with you; keep to your tracts and your churches and we will quietly let things take their chance. But let me ask in the name of God and humanity if we are going to rest satisfied with this gospel of *laissez faire*? Is there inspiration for a true life in that standing-off in puzzled, dazed impotence? Is life to glide on undirected, and all work to be aimless? No—that sleep of indifference can only end in awaking to despair, deep and dark. Can it be that we poor mortals have no gospel of power unto salvation? I believe not. We have a gospel of life; of salvation; a gospel for plain, practical life upon the earth; precepts for great practice, and laws of right living.

INFANT MORTALITY—PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The mortality of children under one year during the present hot season in Montreal has been very great, and even greater still in the City of New York. I cannot believe that real indifference exists in the minds of philanthropic people in Canada in regard to this public evil, which, on a first view, would seem to form a great deduction from the merits of our Canadian climate; indeed, we are aware that the question has provoked a good deal of discussion at one time and another, and our late valued and public spirited citizen, Dr. Carpenter, gave much of his time and efforts to the endeavour to elucidate it, but our Social Reformers now seem to feel somewhat beaten in their endeavours. It is a pity the vital statistics of the Dominion, and especially of Montreal, are not more complete, so that the actual dimensions and localities of the mischief might be pointed out. Having but few figures that are of much service, we may at any rate fall back upon the general facts or what are commonly so regarded. And one is, that there is no very special mortality of the kind in Quebec City; another, that we do not find it in ordinarily healthy districts of Quebec Province,—the Eastern Townships for example. We have no means for a correct comparison of the status of all the cities of the Dominion in this respect, as we ought to have. It does seem that Montreal and New York have an unfortunate preëminence in this matter. In New York the heat in summer is more intense than in Canada, and of late the deaths of young children have amounted to about fifty a day in that city. There are remarkable electrical conditions in hot weather in Montreal, arising doubtless from the rocky elevation of the mountain in the midst of a great plain. The mountain also keeps off the northerly breezes which might refresh the city. To what extent we ought especially to attribute these deaths to the