

thence the earthquake shocks come. The base of the pyramid is much broader than the apex, but if it be laid in the marsh or the quicksand the whole structure sinks. Shaftesbury's tastes, like F. W. Robertson's, were with the elect aristocracy; but, like him, his principles were with the mob. His great aim was to lift the common people to a higher level, and, because the only way to find a solid fulcrum for his lever was to get down to their plane, he would not accept any honor or office which put them at too great a distance. When, in 1855, Palmerston urged him to take a place in the ministry of the realm, he answered: "I cannot satisfy myself that to accept office is a divine call; but I am satisfied that God has called me to labor among the poor." Of one-half of his life that sentence is the key. When again, in 1866 Lord Derby urged him to accept a high office, he said, "1,600,000 operative are still excluded from the benefits of the Factory acts, and, so long as they are unprotected, I cannot take office."

Much of his public work bore *directly* on evangelism. As late as 1855 he found an unrepealed law, forbidding gospel teaching and worship in private houses where, besides the family, over twenty persons were gathered. Under such an enactment any religious gathering, not under the protection of the established church, might be dispersed as an unlawful conventicle! Shaftesbury moved for the repeal of this relic of barbarism. He presented the facts: millions of non-churchgoers; all the churches together unable to cope with prevailing immorality and infidelity; the need of using every agency to pervade society with the gospel; and he showed how if literally construed that law would shut up every Bible class, Sunday school, cottage lecture and ragged school, and make the 25,000 annual meetings of the City Mission unlawful.

Of course he met opposition. Indifferentism said the decree was a dead letter; he replied that a dormant reptile is not dead, and may be warmed into life when occasion serves.* Ecclesiasticism fought him, but he insisted that "permission" to breathe is no more absurd than permission to pray or praise, teach or preach; and that, with no limits save those demanded by public morality or safety, every Englishman should enjoy his right to worship God when, where and how he pleased.

He was a man of *many sympathies*. The unity of his purpose was not more conspicuous than the multiplicity of his labors and interests. If he was narrow at the point, he was broad at the base. While he was fighting the "Improvement Companies," that, while displacing old tenements by newer houses, drove the poor into overcrowded dwellings or compelled them to lodge at a great distance from their workshops or else pay excessive rents, he could originate a sanitary commission in connection with the war in the far East.

*Lord Brougham.