

their day, which was this: That virtue was always rewarded by prosperity, and vice always punished by sickness or adversity. Here was their friend suffering in body and estate, and taking counsel of their dogma; they said: "Job must be a great sinner, or he would not have to suffer so." They were good men; they were sincere men; they were learned in the religious lore of the day; but they only held a partial truth—the orthodoxy of the age was wrong. There were "more things in Heaven and earth" than their philosophy had dreamt of. While those men are reiterating their doctrines as to God's moral government of the world, go behind the scenes and you may see the secret of the plot. In high heaven a man's destiny is being fought out. Before God it has been said that no man loved goodness for its own sake, but only for its profit. It had been stated in open court of heaven that man is wholly selfish; selfish in his virtues and in his vices; that if he served God it was all for gain. One has come to preach in heaven the total depravity of the human race. A scoff has been flung in the face of God against the universe He has made, and against the most beautiful and pious forms of human life. And Job is called upon to vindicate Almighty God, to uphold in his own person the divine honor and the power of divine love. Job's friends knew nothing of that, and it never occurred to them that their dogma might be wrong. They thought they knew the right of it, but we can see how they blundered. It was not that Job was suffering on account of his sins as they supposed, but the battle of heaven and of God was being fought by a man upon the earth. The lesson is plain—"we know in part and prophecy in part." The perfect is not yet come. The doctrines we hold may be wrong in some particular. While that is so, while our vision is so dim and our knowledge so small; while men differ so much, while God holds back so much from all, we can never be brought into intellectual accord; we can only hold our partial truths, cry for the light, and be generous towards all who differ from us. There is in the human mind and in the nature of truth a principle of variation, a principle that will make itself respected. And it is well. It assures to every man, who will use his reason, an individuality, a distinct personality, a place in the world and a view of moral truth all his own. Intellectual drones—men too idle or too indifferent to use their reasoning powers—men who let others think for them and reason for

them, may be brought to use a common form of expression, and to believe that they have found unity by intellectual agreement—but with serious, earnest, thinking men—with men who have grasped the cardinal doctrine of their own manhood, it never will be so. The other effort to unite men has been made in the direction of one institution. They said one Church for all the people—one set of machinery, and one way of working for all men. The Romish Church tried to do that for the world—the Episcopal Church tried to do it for England, and each has failed. It was inevitable. Men differ, and modes of operation and forms of speech must differ. Creeds became stereotyped things, but men do not. Institutions have a settled form, but men develop. The temple on Mount Moriah was great and very grand; it was built with much labor and most wondrous skill—the ceremony was imposing and impressive—it did for a time, meeting the wants of a nation. But it passed away, for the nation broadened into a world, for which only one temple was great enough and grand enough, Jesus Christ, the living Lord, in whose holiness, love, and power, man can hide his life and worship God.

I have a great regard for the Congregational form of church life and polity. I believe it to be nearest the Primitive Church in method of working. At first I find that the power was vested in the people—each Church acted separately and for itself, administering its own affairs. But I am not a Congregationalist mainly because of that. In this matter, as in most others, I hold a thoroughly utilitarian creed. I wouldn't hold a form of church government simply because it is venerable. The great idea of a church is that form may minister to life, and creed to alter Christian character: it is to build men up strong in faith mighty to do and to suffer their Master's will. And it is because the Congregational form of church order is most suited to my mental cast, because I think I see advantages to the individual and to the people in it, that I hold it. It lays upon men the duty of self-government; it compels them to take their share of responsibility, to exercise their judgment and assert their conviction. It teaches men that they are identified with the church, that it is expected of them that they be active members, bringing their highest faculties—all their powers of mind and soul, to build each other up in the perfectness of Christ. It demands of all its members that they show some proof of inward life, letting their faith bring forth just works. They choose their own pastor by their own unfet-