

prompts him to follow the negro's advice, and in choosing a work "go where there is most debbil;" the man or woman who dares hot fires, to pluck a burning brand and change it to a budding branch; who, in a word, loses life to save, will never in the end alienate the common people.

Carlyle said, "Show me the man you honor, and by that better than any other I know what kind of a man you are." A few verbal changes turn this saying into a valuable axiom for our purpose: Show me the disciple or church that honors the man, as such, and by that better than any other I know the sort of a Christian or church it is. There is a way of winning men to the Church and to Christ. As Lord Lawrence said of British rule in India, "Christian things, done in a Christian way, will never alienate a heathen." To hold every human soul as of priceless value before God, worth more than new carpets and cushions—to separate between character and clothes; to create in our churches an atmosphere where the "Carpenter's Son" shall still find a warm welcome for his poorest fellow-tradesman, is the indispensable requisite to the discharge of our mission.

We must not be content with things as they are. We often boast of our large and wealthy churches, as though we forgot that our prosperity is our peril! Heights overlook depths; an apex implies altitude; and so there is a risk even in success, for the riches of the affluent may be the hopeless misery of poverty; the refinement of culture may mean the contempt of the ignorant. The Parian vase, white as snow and fair as art, may confront a Stygian pool of moral filth and social crime. Better a tallow dip that gives light than a golden chandelier without a flame; the humblest church in a log hut, if it is redeeming mankind, than the most palatial cathedral, from whose foundations flows no river of God.

Modern notions of culture endanger not only our mission, but our faith. Ethics and æsthetics, politics and athletics cannot take the place of regeneration. And the fastidiousness of refined taste, that is too easily shocked and cannot stand the "poor smell," may make a disciple too nice for service. In botany we find that cultivation carried to excess makes seedless blooms—the petals, pistils, stamens, and nectaries absorbing the vitality meant for the ovaries. And that is a false culture in society which imperils or impairs a holy fertility. That is not a true Christian plant whose seed is not in itself after its kind. In our Lord's great "parable of the sower" He quaintly hints that some seed fell among thorns, which sprang up and choked it: so that, though it took hold on the soil and had a growth, its growth was all stalk, tall and spindling; root, but no fruit; blade, but no ear with full corn in the ear. How many disciples there are who know nothing of holy fertility, and are not themselves seed of the kingdom! God cares most of all for character that is godly and has the secret of self-propagation. The refinement that makes us too nice and neat, too fastidious and punctilious to stoop to lift up the fallen, is deserving only of contempt; it is but the blooming of a selfishness that in God's eyes is deformity.