

SPIRITUAL FORCES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

A Sermon

Preached at the Seventy-third Annual Meeting of
The Congregational Home Missionary Society, in Hartford, Conn.
May 23, 1899

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1899

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SERMON PREACHED FOR THE SEVENTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY
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TEXT—John 6:63: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

No deeper words were ever spoken by our Lord. They touch the roots of individual and social life.

We may well consider them at this Missionary Anniversary, for they express the fundamental principles of all our effort. In the belief that it is the Spirit only that giveth life, that the forces of Christian Faith, Hope and Love are essential to personal and national well-being, this Home Missionary organization has carried on its fruitful work for nearly three-quarters of a century, touching with divine vitality the ever-expanding domain of the Republic. It is this truth that has burned in the souls of those Christian men and women who have followed our civilization in its majestic march to the Pacific.

In the light of it we may well review the victories of the past, study the problems and perils of to-day, and peer into the future with a wise, unfaltering Faith.

From the beginning, American Christianity has given the supreme place to spiritual forces, in the conviction that man's foremost need is the renewal of his nature by the spirit of God. The largest influence in our national life has been the Christian teaching and temper, which have lead the churches to seek, first of all, the regeneration of the human soul and the upbuilding of noble character after the pattern of Christ. On the continent of Europe the effort by Church and State is to govern and educate men from without. It is by submission, by discipline, by intellectual skill, by institutions, that men are to be fitted to become servants of the State. The Puritan idea has always gone deeper. The Puritan purpose has ever been to reach and renew the soul. Captain Mahan prophesied victory for our armies on account of the superiority of American over

Spanish manhood; but back of this superiority are the great controlling ideas of American Christianity; and in this respect they are in harmony with the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ. He came to found a kingdom of renewed souls. What Socrates and Cicero never saw, the great apostle to the Gentiles beheld in the cities of Greece and Italy—men regenerated, born into a new life.

We profoundly believe in bettering human environment. Improved environment should make easier the great work of the Church—the work of renewing men. But better conditions and external improvements are not able to meet, of themselves, the radical needs of human nature. They profit nothing simply in the sense that they do not impart life. The blinded efforts of some people to cure this world suggest the picture of a man whitewashing a pest-house, or opening schools and missions for children bitten by mad dogs. A wild Russian wolf may be chained and partially subdued, and be even made to eat bread; but you slip the chain and give him liberty, and the wolf nature asserts itself, and the next winter he will be thirsting for the blood of children in the wilds of Siberia. A man may have all that this world can do for him, and be ripe for perdition. Perhaps the most horrible disclosures which have come to notice during our lifetime have been made in connection with the highest social products of civilization. Men who have been born to those conditions of wealth which so many sigh for, who had their training in the schools and in all the respectabilities of life, have shown that their hearts were with the swine. In comparison with some of the polluted men of culture and leisure in the world's chief cities, the so-called barbarians of Germany whom Tacitus described were angels from heaven. The three devils, of cruelty, lust, and greed, are not to be cast out by gold, by luxury, or by æsthetics. If in 1869 you had walked through the beautiful streets of Paris, you would have seen the gayest of capitals, with the best theatres, the most extensive and attractive art-galleries, in the world, and you would have smiled had a prophet told you that there were savages underneath all this show and glitter who within a year would outdo the horrors of Central Africa.

That which is born of the flesh may be decked in silken robes and given a dressing of culture, and set in the midst of gardens and galleries, but it still remains flesh.

As the grain of sand is dead, and can become living matter only by contact with the life of plant or animal, so, in accordance with spiritual biology, the dead soul, however beautiful with intellectual accomplishments, must be renewed by the touch of the Spirit of God.

These truths have given incentive to those Christian activities which in America have absorbed the greater part of our efforts. Since, without the renewal of their natures, men remain outside the Kingdom of Heaven, the disciples of Christ can never, in their devotion to better institutions, neglect the chief work of the Church. We are shocked by the blasphemy and infidelity to Christ of the great hierarchies which exalt external conformity to the Church above internal conformity to the Spirit. And therefore American Christianity has put foremost those institutions and efforts which evangelize men and build them up in Christian faith and character. This missionary century has exploded the idea that a pagan nation must first be taught all the arts of civilization before it can be ready for Christ. We know that whenever men learn the story of God's love, whenever their minds are so open that they feel its touch on their souls, then they clothe their nakedness, build new houses, plow the soil, demand education for their children. The missionary is the greatest civilizer, whether in Central Asia or Central Montana. The chief evangelizers of nations have wrought beneficent changes, compared with which the work of warriors and kings has been feeble and short-lived. Mr. Gladstone always saw and felt that Christianity was at the basis of liberty, justice, progress, and prosperity. I once ventured to send him a note of grateful appreciation, after reading one of his wisest essays on the truth of the Gospel history, and he kindly sent me a word of thanks for my estimate of the service that he endeavored to render to the cause which, as he said, "was at the basis of all good causes."

Think of the immeasurable influence which John Knox became to Scotland, and you may well believe that if St. Patrick had lived a thousand years later, and been the John Knox of Ireland; if the regenerating truth of the Gospel had entered more fully the lives of that lovable but priest-ridden people, or if English landlordism had been as earnest in evangelism as in the exaction of rents, Ireland might to-day be another Scotland.

Had the Church of France been reorganized in the sixteenth century on the truths in the third chapter of John's Gospel, that nation might have been spared both St. Bartholemew and the French Revolution.

The State Churches of Europe have always been willing to compromise with these truths; but to-day there are leading minds in Germany crying for a new reformation, that shall make the new birth the condition of church membership; which shall insist on a spiritual life, and shall bring to the turbulent and unbelieving masses

the Gospel which has made the common people of New England the most potent promoters of freedom, industry, law, and civilization, that the world ever knew. The primal need of our imperiled cities is to bring their unevangelized thousands to the knowledge of that Gospel which is able to renew them as well as the barbarians of the Congo. Culture cannot take the place of conscience; conscience loses efficacy when men cease to feel that God is behind it and in it.

This rapid statement of some of our fundamental convictions is made as an all-sufficient justification of the plan and purpose of this Society to give its strength to the preaching of the Gospel. This Society has said, "Let America flourish, like the old city of Glasgow, by the preaching of the word"—not by institutionalism or ritualism. Such was the divine thought that gave new lustre to the eyes and thrilled in the voice of Dr. Clapp, the great-hearted Secretary we miss and mourn to-night and shall love evermore.

We believe that it is the Spirit that giveth life. It is not a difficult thesis to maintain, in such a company as this, that spiritual forces are indispensable to our very existence as a free people. We believe that six generations of oblivion of these truths, that two hundred years of history shaped by ideas, forces and institutions directly opposed to the ideas, forces and institutions which have made the true and better America, would certainly take us out of the list of living and put us into the category of the dying nations. On such convictions as we have thus indicated Connecticut was founded. On such a creed New England was built. With such ideas the "Mayflower" was freighted.

We rejoice that we are assembled in this historic church, and in this city, where we feel the perfect unity of home and foreign missions as fully as do Americans dwelling beneath our flag in Porto Rico or Luzon. In coming to Hartford, the Home Missionary Society returns to a chief fountain-head of Christian patriotism, one of the main sources of that higher Americanism which has been dominated by Christian faith. We do not forget what the splendid genius and powerful spirit of Bushnell wrought for our nobler life. We do not fail to remember the Seminary, which has manned our missionary enterprises, nor the generous givers who have so constantly maintained them. It has often been said that one must go west of the Alleghanies to find America. I do not believe it. I have lived on both sides of the Appalachian Ridges, and I have found the true America, throbbing and vital, resolute and independent, east as well as west of their beautiful summits. I look upon New England as the mother of genuine Americanism, and as a

chief builder of our nationality; and no one understands either the past, the present or the future of the American Republic who is not in sympathy with the ideas of which New England has been both the champion and the expression. It is impossible to account for the American nationality, either in its origin, its controlling purposes, its development, or its apparent destiny, without recognizing its vital connection with those Biblical forces which colonized Massachusetts and Connecticut. The American nation is a growth into whose majestic strength new elements have been added from age to age, so that it stands to-day like the California pine, with a trunk broad enough to be the shade of an army, while it waves its top in the sunlight of God, higher than any other of the magnificent growths of the past. But to find the nation's germ we must go back of constitutions and revolutions and later emigrations, to the Christian purposes of those men who fled from corruptions and tyrannies of the Old World and battled with the savage and the soil, the winter and wilderness, in the New. There has been a strange diversity, indicating, however, a substantial unity, in the accounts which historical students have given of our beginnings. One historian traces the origin of our nationality to the pastor of the Pilgrims, John Robinson of Leyden; and with a similar insight Bancroft discovered it in the cabin of the "Mayflower." Rufus Choate tracked it to John Calvin in Geneva, and others have been content to follow it to the teachings of John Knox in Edinburgh, or to the soil of Naseby and Marston Moor, and to the heart and brain of the greatest of all English sovereigns, Oliver Cromwell. Of kindred mind was Lowell when he wrote that "the red dint on Charles's block marked one in our era." Professor Rogers of Oxford believed that American independence was a glorious result of Holland's successful battle for civil and religious freedom against the Spanish monarchy, then dominant in the Old World and the New. Carlyle declared that we must go back to Luther to find the moral forces which made America possible. All these historical students reach true and very similar conclusions. It is certain that some of the chief impulses which led to the colonizing of the Atlantic seaboard, and the founding and development of an independent nation, sprang directly from that era of reformation described by the Puritan poet of England: "Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the obscure corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it, the schools opened, divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues, the princes and cities trooping apace to the new erected banner of salvation; the martyrs, with the irresistible might of weakness, shaking the powers

of darkness and scorning the fiery rage of the Old Red Dragon." It was an echo of the Christian Scriptures which Jefferson sounded in the Declaration of American Independence. "We rummaged everywhere," he wrote, "to find the Biblical formulas of the old Puritans." "The independent divines of England," wrote Sir James Mackintosh, "were the teachers of John Locke." And John Locke was the chief teacher of that last of the Puritans, Samuel Adams, who was the chief organizer of the American Revolution, and the greatest embodiment of its ideas.

Reverting to that earlier genetic period, we find ourselves in the midst of great spiritual conflicts in England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, Sweden, and France. We find a company of men who, whatever their limitations, recognized the supremacy of the Spirit and the sovereignty of God. They carried in their brains empires surpassing that of Alexander. They believed themselves the agents of divine Providence. These men—Carver, Bradford, Winthrop, Hooker, Cotton, Davenport, Roger Williams—were men whose character made New England, as Mr. Gladstone wrote, "the centre of those commanding influences which gave to the country as a whole its political and moral atmosphere." "Our Puritan ancestors," as Lowell said at the Harvard Anniversary, "have been misrepresented and maligned by persons without imagination enough to make themselves contemporary with and therefore able to understand the men whose memories they strive to blacken. That happy breed of men who both in Church and State led our first emigration were children of the most splendid intellectual epoch that England has ever known. They were the coevals of a generation which passed on, in scarcely diminished radiance, the torch of life kindled in great Eliza's golden days."

I have no sympathy, therefore, with those who would exclude New England from the domain of the truest Americanism, remembering, as I do, our national origin and the circumstances of those various emigrations of ideas and of men which have made the commanding epochs of our history. America has had more than one "Mayflower." It was the "Mayflower," bearing the sons and daughters of New England, that landed at Marietta in 1788. It was in New England that Rufus Putnam and Manasseh Cutler settled the plan which was embodied in the Magna Charta of the Northwest, the Ordinance of 1787. There is no danger of overestimating, there is peril rather of underestimating, the importance of that settlement and the greatness of that Ordinance. Without it, it has been truly said, "the Constitution of the United States would have lost half of its value."

It was one of the miracles of history, indicating the strategy of Providence, which sent the founders of the Northwest to Marietta "at the precise time when," as Senator Hoar has said, "alone they could bring with them the institutions which moulded its destiny. A few years earlier or a few years later, and the great Ordinance would have been impossible."

There have been still other "Mayflowers" freighted with New England men and ideas, making epochs in our history. One of these, bearing Jeremiah Porter and a company of Christian soldiers on a stormy voyage over Lake Michigan, landed at the mouth of the Chicago River in 1833, and founded the First Church in what was to be the metropolis of the West. A "Mayflower" on wheels crossed the Rocky Mountains, bearing Marcus Whitman, with a freight so precious, with a purpose so high, with a spirit so commanding, that the spriritual destinies of empires greater than that of Germany were determined by it. Other pilgrims from New England have entered the Golden Gate at San Francisco, have penetrated into Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas; into Michigan and Wisconsin; have crossed the Ohio, the Missouri, and the Tennessee, and have carried the seed-corn of new institutions through the fair, broad South-land which has recently been annexed, with indissoluble heart-allegiance, to the great American commonwealth. New England has been a chief instrument in the hand of God in Americanizing the imperial Republic. She has been foremost in sustaining the activities of this Society, in planting churches in what are now populous States, and in making those churches the centers of beneficent influences wherever their spires point toward heaven. There families have been gathered, children taught, God honored, and His Day respected. There the divine spirit has led men to the fellowship of Jesus Christ. There has been fashioned the love of the nobler things of human life. Out of the churches have come Christian schools, academies, and colleges. Out of them has come the spirit which has struck at corrupt legislation, smiting down gambling, intemperance, the lottery. Out of them has come the patriotism, the high sense of America's Mission, which made the West so grandly loyal in the critical years of the Civil War. Without them, the cannon-shot against Fort Sumter might have been an explosion shattering the Republic.

The spirit of New England, the conviction which emphasizes the value of religion and education, has come to be the ruling spirit in many of the great States beyond the Alleghanies. Throughout our churches, and those of kindred life, there has been growing a pur-

pose to carry the Gospel everywhere, to send it, like a messenger of heaven, across oceans and deserts and barbarous continents, to the farthest isles of the sea; a purpose to put this leaven of celestial truth into great cities, in the slums as well as the palaces, among the outcast and criminal as well as among the learned and luxurious. In spite of temporary and sporadic declensions, American Christianity, as a whole, has come to a fuller realization of its sacred mission. We recognize our obligation to send the Gospel to all men, and feel that we have a peculiar responsibility to make our own land as Christian as possible. This land is rapidly becoming the foremost of the nations of the world. Only a year has passed since a Vermont sailor, Admiral George Dewey, anchored Asia off our western shores. America is gathering to her own bosom the children of all nationalities. The missionaries of this Society preach the Gospel in twenty languages. And since the efforts of the next few years may determine whether or not the rapidly organizing society in some of the communities of the great West, and in all our greatest cities, and in our new possessions in both Indies, shall be predominantly Christian or pagan, the responsibility has become tremendous—indeed, the one chief concern of our lives—to fill this nation and all its territories with the light of the knowledge of God.

As a people we touch Africa on our Atlantic seaboard and throughout the vast southern domain. We touch Asia on our Pacific coast, the great Spanish populations on our Mexican border, and the representatives of all mankind in the streets of every great, flourishing city, from Boston to Omaha, from Denver to San Francisco, from Duluth to San Antonio. Like the lordly city of Bombay—but much more strategically and amply—America has become the meeting place of the nations, a miniature of the globe. When Lyman Beecher sixty years ago sounded throughout our churches his mighty trumpet-call for aid in western evangelization, he was a prophet and a pioneer. But his greatest predictions have been dwarfed by the gigantic fulfilments. He did not foresee a time when 12,000 miles of new railway would be built every year, the greater part of the increase in the Central and Western belts of the country; he did not foresee a time when \$300,000,000 would be annually expended in building up highways for the march of immigration into the Southwest, the world's pasture-land; into the great Northwest, the world's granary; into the great Central West, the world's silver and golden storehouse and treasury. He did not see his own city of Cincinnati grown to be larger than New York was in his boyhood, St. Louis with a population of more than 500,000, a third of a million people

gathered in the twin cities of the Upper Mississippi, and such clusters of commercial capitals as are seen in Texas, Oregon and California, and along the fertile banks of the Missouri. He did not foresee that western Babylon at the foot of Lake Michigan, one of the mightiest growths of time. But though he had seen it all, he could not have felt more keenly that the lifeblood of the Gospel must be the lifeblood of the Republic, or else it is doomed.

New perils have come into the foreground since Lyman Beecher's day. We have heard from ten thousand tongues that there is a strong tendency of modern populations, not only in America but in Europe, toward the municipal centers—the statement that the political and moral influences of great communities are increasingly dominant over this nation. Thirty years hence the majority of American votes will be cast in cities. There is therefore no civic virtue more demanded in our life to-day than a wise patriotism, especially that form of public spirit which has been called municipal patriotism. The latter was the original type of this noble virtue.

The enthusiasm of the Jew was largely a zeal for his capital city. From Babylonian exile he sent his faithful cry across the desert, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning.”

It was a somewhat similar devotion in the citizenship of Attica which made Athens, during her brief primacy, “the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence.” On the Tiber the Roman built a capital embodying certain ideals, and he called that city imperial and divine, and her proudest poet sang of the ancient heroism of Æneas, from which there sprang at last the walls of eternal Rome.

The ancient understanding of a city, as Principal Fairbairn has said, was not merely “a place where men have most congregated, and built to themselves houses and workshops; where the exchange and the cathedral stand together—the one for admiration, and the other for business; where warerooms run into long, unlovely streets; where narrow and unfragrant closes are crowded with the poor, and spacious, yet hard, monotonous squares are occupied by the rich.” The city “expressed all that was ideal in the State, or fatherland.” The ancient Civitas has become with us the Nation; but while the spirit of national patriotism has been fostered into conquering strength, and numbers among its trophies the proudest names of our century—Bolivar, Bismarck, Kossuth, Cavour, O'Connell, Abraham Lincoln—the spirit of civic and municipal patriotism has not had an equal development, and is enriched with but few splendid victories. It seems strange that men who would die for their country are will-

ing to see their own city given up to the control of shameless "boodlers," compared with whom the robber-barons of the Middle Ages were bands of foreign missionaries, ready for canonization. There is immense and pressing need that the spirit of the ancient freedom should again be aroused. It was the great towns of the Netherlands that earliest caught the fire from Luther's torch. Municipal liberty was achieved in European cities in advance of nationality, and the history of man's intellectual, political and commercial emancipation sweeps in a brilliant, though often bloody, procession through the streets of Athens and Florence, of Ghent and Bruges, of Leyden and Amsterdam, of Antwerp and Geneva.

We know that among the future possibilities of American life are a heathenism and wretchedness, concentrated in some American London, approaching the awful brutality and misery depicted by the General of the Salvation Army in "Darkest England"—where the cry of distress, breaking from those pestilential rookeries, is wrung from lips purple with alcohol and crimson with fever. It is the city, which Biblical inspiration makes the type of an inhuman, material civilization—that Babylon which is yet to be destroyed, whose merchants shall mourn as they stand afar off and see the smoke of its burning; the city, whose merchandise is gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and scarlet, and all manner of vessels of iron, and brass, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, *and slaves, and the souls of men.* Is not many a civilized metropolis rapidly becoming a ruthless machine, wherein are ground up the souls of men?

Voices far more influential than mine have been urging New York and Chicago, Philadelphia and St. Louis, Cincinnati and San Francisco, to awake out of sleep. When from the heavy ordnance of an Eastern navy yard thirty-seven sunset guns were fired in honor of the thirty-seven States, we are told that a very deaf woman, living in the neighborhood, looked up from her knitting, after the last thunderous report, and meekly said, "Come in." She had just become conscious that something noisy was going on; and there are tens of thousands of fairly good people dwelling in our cities, who, after all the artillery and dynamite of the last ten years, are finally beginning to understand that mischief is brewing; and I hope that they will be willing for a moment to withdraw from their terrible absorption in business life, and to say to the better era that is thundering at their door, "For the sake of God and humanity, come in!" I believe that the fire of a divinely-kindled patriotism

is not dead, but it needs to be turned, with destructive ardor, against the chief political evils of the Republic.

We must not dream that our excellent system of government is a panacea for such corrupting ills. Unless the Government is conducted by wise and good men, it will no more prevent and abolish such evils than a velvet coat will keep off the Russian *grippe*. Public sentiment is a lymph of great healing power, which should be injected into a corrupted municipality; but, unfortunately, the public sentiment which makes itself most clamorously heard by mayors and aldermen gets its diabolical inspiration from the depths of the sour-mash tub, and finds its business in coining fortunes out of human frailty and sin. I am informed that the stay-at-home vote in a single ward of Chicago gave the control of that city, a few years ago, to the saloon power that still very largely governs it. Since the caucus, the convention and the polling-booth are the real political sovereigns in America, men who are faithless here cannot claim to be model patriots or good citizens. Mr. Henry C. Lea, of Philadelphia, has shown that city maladministration is not to be attributed to the poor so much as to the men of high social position and character, who are not so worthy to exercise the right of suffrage as the most ignorant foreigner, because they refuse to exercise it, or allow their blind partisanship to enlist them in the support of bad candidates.

De Tocqueville perceived, sixty years ago, that the city, through political corruption, was to be a chief menace to our freedom; and we are living to-day amid some of the frightful realities which he predicted. Our municipal evils are rightly attributed by Professor Bryce to the strength of party loyalty in things where no political principle is involved. The trouble, also, is that so many men's pockets control their politics; they weakly imagine that they cannot afford to follow their consciences; they are determined not to offend their patrons; they prefer to sell their principles to get a larger sale for their goods. As Dante, the Florentine patriot, who cherished even in exile the lily-loveliness of the city of the Arno, looked upon her fierce factions as the spotted panther which impeded his poetic way up the mount of vision, so, fierce, unmeaning factions obstruct the elevation of our municipalities. Therefore, an educational and moral campaign should be reinaugurated and continued.

I have been delighted in the last few months to notice many indications of a purpose in some of our cities, small and great, to make them beautiful with gardens and parks, to cleanse their streets of foulness, and to decorate them with monuments of art. The greatest art the world has ever known came from republican

Athens, republican Holland, and the fair, free cities of Italy. Art has a gracious and beautiful ministry, if it is pure and genuine. But there are some things which art cannot do. Paris cannot cure her sensualities with pictures any more than she could kill the Commune with a canvas, even though Delacroix has covered it with matchless colorings or Millet has filled it with heavenly-minded peasants. To some of you, art in Paris may seem like a pearl on the neck of the demimonde, and art in Chicago or New York may seem to you like a diamond on a soiled and ragged robe. And though art may give a grace and splendor and dignity to municipal life, as in the cities of Italy and the Netherlands; though it may widen and brighten the field of human thought, and even serve the moralities, there are things of far deeper concern, which commend themselves to our consciences and our conduct. Say all that you please about the refining influences of culture, and about better laws and institutions, the primary and fundamental requirement is better men, a more Christian character. It is not more and richer universities that America most needs, but more and stronger Christian colleges. Legislation and social panaceas, and all human contrivances, are vain unless the heart be renewed. What said the statesman-prophet of Israel, Isaiah? "My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." How many historic vineyards, how many fair institutions, have thus disappointed expectation! I do not look upon religion as a last resort of a people grown desperate in trying vainly other remedies. That seems to be the condition in France as described in the appeals of Brunetiere and others. Religion, which is essential to conscientiousness, must enter the very beginnings and foundations of life.

A traveler in a hotel in Washington, noticing the fire-escape at the window, and a Bible lying on the table, said to a servant, "What are these things for?" "The ladder at the window is to help you escape if the hotel is on fire." "I understand that," said the traveler; "but what is the use of the Bible?" "That, sir, is to be used when the fire is so far advanced that you can't escape by the ladder."

The builders of America, the founders of Hartford, and the Christian pioneers of Chicago and other cities, acted on a different conviction. The Word of God was foremost in their thoughts; and if there is to be anything permanently glorious in American city

life, it must descend, like the New Jerusalem, in Apocalyptic vision, coming down from God out of heaven. The history of our race, which began in the Garden, finds its goal and the fulfilment of its highest ideals in that Holy City, the *Civitas Dei*, into which the glory and honor of the nations shall be carried. If this splendid vision is to be realized in the faintest measure in American cities, it will be through the agencies which have made other cities strong in righteousness. You must Christianize if you would Americanize and civilize the complex population of Germans, Scandinavians, Irishmen, Hollanders, Frenchmen, Russians, Italians, Bohemians, Hungarians, Poles, Arabs, Syrians, Africans and Chinese. There is something startling in the fact that, as Lyman Abbott has said, "We cling to the same strap in the horse-car with men who never read the New Testament." I thoroughly sympathize with all that Dr. Albert Shaw and Dr. Parkhurst, Washington Gladden and President Low, have said of the need of securing honest business methods in city administration, and I also believe that the best missionary work on earth to-day is the planting of churches and mission schools and kindergartens in our great cities, the most neglected parts of America.

When rich men affirm that they can find no safe and wise use for their money in public-spirited charities, they reveal the grossest ignorance. When multitudes are starving for the bread of life, and children are crying with hunger for the bread which feeds the body; when home missionaries are half paid on our frontiers and worrying that they have no means of sending their children to college, and vital charities and moral enterprises of great pith and moment are made futile, is there a much more abominable spectacle than that which was recently described: a man, made suddenly rich, exhausting his intelligence and that of Delmonico's assistants in the prodigious effort to expend ten thousand dollars on a single dinner? "Whose glory is their shame, whose god is their belly." The ideal citizen is not a man who is merely a clothed and animated roll of bank stock and railroad bonds! O young millionaire of to-day, living amid such splendid opportunities, with God's riches intrusted to you, set your face against a selfish life, against the ostentatious vulgarities which recent books have opened to our view in the American metropolis, the social contentions where *chef* vies with *chef*, and butler strives with butler, and wine-cellar contends with wine-cellar, and where Worth and Redfern are the Achilles and Hector of the social battlefield! Heaven save our cities from such ignoble Iliads!

But I thank God that America has been rich, and is now rich, with men—masters of material things, princes of commerce, leaders of finance—who have been rich toward God. No other nation has such a roll call of faithful, consecrated millionaires as America. This society honors them, our colleges honor them, our imperiled cities honor them. No men of our nation bear heavier burdens or have done larger things. It would be invidious to name a few of them when hundreds deserve our gratitude and our praise. They stand between us and grave degeneracies. They brighten our faith in the Republic and in the Kingdom of God.

But we have not gathered here to-night to contemplate dolefully what yet remains to be done. We are not pessimists, especially in a year like this, when our national life has been as much exalted as expanded. We do not forget that God rules, and that He has fulfilled His gracious purposes toward us in the past, in times and ways we least expected. To be despondent is to forget God and what He has already wrought. Pessimism and atheism are owlets from the same nest. I have not discovered among those whose hearts are fired with missionary enthusiasm any disposition to despair, and rarely any tendency toward malignant cynicism or moral hysterics. "Our helm," as Emerson wrote, "is given up to a better guidance than our own. The course of events is quite too strong for any helmsman, and our little wherry is taken in tow by the ship of the Great Admiral, which knows the way, and which has the force to draw men and states and planets to their goal." And surely, they who believe in a moral order administered by infinite love and wisdom—manifest in a nationality now so splendid and various, which was not planned as a warehouse or a glittering exchange, but rather as a temple wherein God should abide, a dwelling-place for the Invisible, more resplendent than "the Mount of Alabaster topped with golden spires" which once blazed on the summit of Moriah—may find their faith and expectation worthily expressed by the most patriotic of our poets:

"God of our fathers, Thou who wast,
 Art, and shalt be when those eye-wise who flout
 Thy secret presence, shall be lost
 In the great light that dazzles them to doubt ;
 We, sprung from loins of stalwart men
 Whose strength was in their trust
 That Thou wouldst make Thy dwelling in their dust,
 And walk with them a fellow-citizen,
 Who build a city of the just ;

We, who believe life's bases rest
 Beyond the probe of chemic test,
 Still, like our fathers, feel Thee near,
 Sure that, while lasts the immutable decree,
 The land to human nature dear
 Shall not be unbeloved by Thee."

And since our nationality has had a heavenly birth, it is right to expect from it notable additions to the political, intellectual and moral achievements of mankind. A grim English critic once sneered at America by saying that it had never done a greatly noble thing. Is there nothing greatly noble in converting a continent vaster than Cæsar's empire with the arts of civilization? Is there nothing greatly noble in the colossal achievements of incorporating 10,000,000 of foreign and somewhat alien population, unused to self-government, and by means of the common-school and the exercise of liberty largely Americanizing the prodigious immigration? Is there nothing greatly noble in the sudden and marvelous growth of science, invention and literature on this side of the sea? Is there nothing greatly noble in the working of our national Constitution in times of peril, the Government continuing without a jar after the assassination of two Presidents, events that would have shaken many a European throne? Is there nothing to draw out one word of cheerful augury in our successful encounter of such a peril as slavery, which England and George III. fastened upon us; of such dangers as rebellion and inflated currency and a disputed presidential election? Is there nothing greatly noble in a population most of whom are delivered from the measureless misery which is the lot of millions in the Old World? Is there nothing greatly noble in the valor and self-sacrifice with which both armies contended in the late Civil War? Why shall not Gettysburg take rank with Marathon in the history of human liberty? Are not the waters of Hampton Roads, covering "the soft ooze where the Cumberland lies," as sacred as Athenian Salamis? I know we have many occasions for humility and for solemn concern when we think of the perils besetting us to-day, from lawlessness and the increase of crime, especially from the despotic liquor power and a vicious spoils-system in city governments. But we have so *many* occasions for rejoicing and gratitude that we should not keep company with despondency for an hour, nor with despair for an instant.

It has been the teaching of our greatest statesmen that the maintenance and spread of religion were essential to our safety and prosperity. De Tocqueville said that despotism may govern with-

out Faith, but liberty cannot. Ours is the only great nation where the Christian religion has had a fair field, unencumbered by state alliances. A hundred years ago the Methodist churches had only a handful of congregations. They now number more communicants than there were then people in the country. The Baptists, who were then mildly persecuted North and South, have to-day three millions of members. The Congregational churches in New England were not then entirely disestablished, and when their severance from the state occurred it proved a blessing and not a curse. The Episcopal Church in Virginia, whose parsons were discredited on account of their Tory leanings, and who had become so dissolute that the legislature found it needful to pass special laws prohibiting them from drunkenness, was disestablished in 1785, and thenceforward, under the great leadership of Bishop Meade and others, the church of Madison and Washington began its better life, and to-day numbers more communicants than were in all the American churches at the opening of the century. A hundred years ago the Presbyterian churches were often built with funds raised by means of lotteries, while drunkenness prevailed in all ranks, among clergy and people, to an almost incredible extent. The temperance reform is one of the brightest pages of the past century, and we ought to thank God that in a hundred years most of the liquor has gone out of the veins of the American church, although it must be sadly confessed that the political power of the liquor-interest was never more despotic and destructive.

At the beginning of this century French infidelity ruled the educated classes of America, and Christianity was thought to be speedily doomed. But what has been the outcome? In 1800 there were only 350,000 church members in a population of 5,000,000, or one in fourteen; while to-day, out of a population of 75,000,000, there are 21,000,000 church members, or one in three and six-tenths, including a Roman Catholic population of 8,000,000. When we reflect that the numerical strength of the church has augmented three times as rapidly as the population; when we note the rise and progress of Sunday Schools which this century has witnessed; when we recall the fact that nearly all the great missionary, philanthropic and reformatory societies are less than a hundred years old; when we contemplate the vast sums that are given for Christian education, and watch the troops of colleges which, as Mr. Beecher once said, "go lowing along over our Western plains like Jacob's kine;" and as we joyfully remember that on every day seven new church buildings are erected on the soil covered by the national flag, and that on

every Lord's day 15,000 new confessors of the Divine Man of Nazareth are enrolled beneath the standard of the cross, we surely have good reason for believing that Washington's hope, expressed in his first inaugural, has been realized, and that our people still render their dutiful homage to the great Author of every public and private good. And besides all this, there has been a great sifting and simplifying of doctrines, a happy dying out of sectarian animosities, a growth of mutual love and confidence among the Christian denominations, a magnifying of likenesses and minifying of differences, a decay of rigid theological system-building and increased devotion to Bible study, and a growing willingness to combine in works of charity and reform. And surely these are signs of hopeful progress worthy to take rank with any of the marvels of invention or with the growth of our national area and the expansion of our national power!

The perils already passed and the precious things already gained ought never to be forgotten when our eager minds are fastened on the new things which seem so desirable. There are but few blessings which the nation now covets which are worth mentioning, compared with the blessings already secured; compared with the peace of our homes, the general safety from violence which, in the name of law, plunders a man's pockets as in Turkey, or takes away his freedom as in Russia; compared with right to choose one's occupation, which more than one half of our race do not yet possess; compared with liberty of travel, of speech, of worship, of assembly; compared with all those circumstances which in this country beckon us with friendly hands and cheer us with kindly voices, and do not, as in so many lands, crush down the aspiring manhood.

The rights and opportunities possessed by us have been won by the tears and toils of sixty centuries, by the labors of men of whom the world was not worthy, dying without the sight of the Canaan into which we have entered. What if Stephen, stoned at the gate of Jerusalem, could have seen Christianity enthroned in the Roman Empire! What if Athanasius, holding out alone against the world, could have seen modern Christendom embracing the leading nationalities—England carrying the Bible in every ship that wakes the "countless laughter of the sea," and America with church bells echoing from spire to spire, from the shores of hundred-harbored Maine to the soft-flowing waves of the Pacific! What if Socrates, dying a martyr to intellectual liberty; what if Milton, writing his noble plea for unlicensed printing; what if the martyrs of Holland

and Scotland, dying for civil freedom, could have witnessed the spectacle of a free state enshrining and defending a free church, which is the glory of our nation! What if Joseph Warren, closing his eyes in death beneath the flag of Bunker Hill, could have seen Cornwallis surrendering the British army at Yorktown! What if Washington, assuming the presidency of 4,000,000 impoverished Americans, could have foreseen this Continental Republic with 75,000,000 of the most prosperous and progressive people on the globe! What if Lovejoy, shot down at Alton for defending a fundamental principle of liberty; or Garrison, dragged through the streets of Boston with a halter around his neck, could then have seen the last fetter broken from the last American slave! What if Ellsworth, dying at Alexandria in the darkened dawn of the mighty struggle, could have seen the victorious armies of Sherman, Logan and Howard, and Sheridan and Grant, march over the Long Bridge into the streets of Washington, and pour their flashing columns and carry their tattered standards, in battalions majestic as the oncoming waves of the sea, under the eyes of an assembled nation! By a hundred bloody steps on

“The world’s great altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God,”

humanity has ascended to the heights on which we breathe. Let us not, in our thoughtlessness and folly, forget the great things which God has done for us, not only in the remoter past, but under our very eyes! While we confer in regard to the evangelization of America, there is assembled in the little Palace of the Woods, outside The Hague, “The cradle of science and international law,” a Congress, whether for Peace, Disarmament or Arbitration, which many deem a far-off prophecy of “The Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.”

The last year has been one of surprises. It is impossible to put ourselves back into the egg-shell of one year ago. No one foresaw what was to occur, not even the President. How wondrously God has educated us, as he educated the nation in the ideas of liberty during the agonizing Civil War! Under the red torch of battle, dull minds discern what has been hidden from them before. America has come to a clearer perception of herself, her mission, her duty, her destiny. In a new and unexampled sense she has become a world-power. Other peoples, too, are beginning to understand us, and our position. Some of them did not comprehend our motives. England, however, did. Outside of Anglo-Saxon liberty, the region

influenced by Puritan and Biblical Christianity, there has been a feeble comprehension of true Americanism, the real spirit of the Republic. America was usually thought of merely as a fat, prosperous, conceited, lawless, uneducated mass of vulgar people. But our brief war for humanity struck this great bulk of ignorance and prejudice, and has shown that we are strong where we were thought to be weak. Our good fighters did more to open the dull eyes of Europe than our good scholars. It is a shameful fact, for it shows how primitive, as yet, is the general European mind. Now that we have come to a new standing and prestige in the world of action, what we signify in the world of thought and religion will make a deeper impression. The recent war has not been one of the great conflicts of history, except in its humane spirit and purpose, and in its results. It was the last struggle between the Middle Ages and the Declaration of Independence, between the Inquisition and the common school, between intolerance and tyranny and the compact in the "Mayflower." And we find ourselves at the close of it alert, self-confident, rejoicing in a reunited country, and yet sobered by a sense, not of *new* responsibilities merely, but of old responsibilities brought nearer home to the conscience and heart. We should not be boastful, and we should not be doubtful. We have great tasks, but we have a great people, wise leaders, a high purpose, and an immeasurable power for good. The croakers were never more cynical, and never less influential. It is surely not an occasion for despondency that the nation which represents liberty, humanity, the purpose to maintain civilization and order, the spiritual forces of the Gospel, the purpose to uplift the poor, and large measures of the mind of Jesus Christ, should have back of it the greatest material resources of any nation. But material resources alone cannot save us. The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that giveth life. It only can transform material agencies into messengers of light and redemption, and encompass all our rocks and shores and templed hills with the enduring radiance of the moral law.

What we need to-day is a larger-minded comprehension of a more than continental problem, and an adequate response to a more than continental need. At the close of his great speech on Conciliation in America, perhaps the greatest speech in our language, Edmund Burke said: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great empire and little minds go ill together. Let us get an American revenue as we have gotten an American empire. English privileges have made it all it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be." Surely here is inspiration even for

Christian enterprise, and we may say, in the spirit of Burke, that the Gospel of Christ has made America all that it is, and that the Gospel of Christ alone will make it all that it can be. It is a stain on our piety and patriotism that debt should ever cling to this great Society. Let us gladden our secretaries, and our hundreds of self-sacrificing home-missionary families, east and west, by removing that stain. With a general revival of deep, intelligent loyalty and fidelity to the missionary cause, that shadow would float from our horizon as the shadow of Spain's 400 years of baleful dominion in the New World vanished with the drifting cannon-smoke over the walls and shores of Santiago.

On the shield of the church of Scotland is the image of the "Burning Bush," with the encompassing words, "*Nec tamen consumedatur*"—"Nor was it yet consumed." On the shield of the church of Ireland is the image of the "Burning Bush," with the words, "*Ardens sed virens*"—"Burning, but flourishing." The Huguenot church of France bears on its shield the image of the "Burning Bush," with the words, "*Flagror non consumor*"—"I burn, but am not consumed." The old evangelical church of Germany had on its shield the same image of the "Burning Bush." The unquenched life of God flaming in his church, the supreme power and the supreme evidence of Christianity—such was the thought of the men who signed in their own blood old Scotland's league and Covenant on the tombstones of the Gray Friars' churchyard; of the men who made the North of Ireland the beacon-light of Protestantism and the nursery of heroes; of the men who lifted the banner of Christ high over the sunny plains of France, and whose faith, not drowned in the blood of St. Bartholomew's Day, is now once more the nation's regenerating life. Such was the thought of the God-fearing men who laid at Plymouth the corner stone of the greatest of Republics. We need not despair of the future. The divine life which has glowed through all the years of our history will not fail us now.