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THE INCARNATION.

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The Incarnation

A Revelation of Human Duties.

A CHARGE DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY OF DURHAM
IN THE CATHEDRAL, NOV. 17, AND IN THE CHAPEL
OF AUCKLAND CASTLE, NOV. 19, 1892.

BY THE RIGHT REV.

THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

Wastell, Bishop Fox.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

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THE INCARNATION

A REVELATION OF HUMAN DUTIES.

BEFORE I enter on the discussion of the special subject which I propose to suggest for your consideration, I must offer you my cordial thanks for the care and thought which, with one or two exceptions, you have bestowed on the questions which I proposed to you. The replies which you have returned combine to give a vivid and minute view of the circumstances and the problems of the Diocese which it would not have been possible to obtain in any other way ; and the knowledge which I have thus gained will serve to encourage and to guide me in whatever work I may hereafter be allowed to do. On future occasions, if the opportunity is given me, I hope to deal at length with some of the points which have been brought into prominence ; but I should not do justice to my feeling if I did not now acknowledge with deep thankfulness the abundant proofs which I have received of the continued devotion and zeal of our clergy and lay-workers, and of the spirit of sympathy and fellowship by which their labours are supported. I do not however wish to dwell to-day on external signs of local or general progress in our Church, or even on fundamental questions of ecclesiastical organisation and politics. I wish rather at this season of most solemn reckoning to fix your attention and my own on the central point of our Faith, and to

ask—in order that we may all ponder the thought in the presence of God—whether the fact of the Incarnation finds adequate expression in our opinions and in our conduct. The Incarnation, in proportion as we give a distinct meaning to the truth, must become to us a revelation of human duties, and it is in this light I invite you to regard it.

In approaching this overwhelming subject, I shall endeavour to fulfil a plan which I had already formed when I was called here, and which has been, as you know, present to my mind throughout my work in Durham. In the Diocesan Conference a year ago I touched upon the obligation which is laid upon the National Church, the spiritual organ of the nation, to deal with the questions of common life in the light of the Christian Faith. I endeavoured to shew then that we have in the fact of the Incarnation, which it is our duty to proclaim, a motive adequate to stir us to resolute action, and strength adequate to support us in the face of difficulties apparently insuperable: that the vision of the patience of God is able to bring back confidence when we are disheartened by disappointments and delays: that as Christians, as Churchmen, we must strive unreservedly, clergy and laity alike, to make the Gospel the rule of our whole life in society and in the state, keeping before us the ideal of the one corporate life in Christ of which we have been made partakers: that we are bound not only to believe that "Jesus is Lord" but to confess Him before men: that it is the characteristic office of the clergy to present principles in the light of fresh experience, and of the laity to embody them with practical wisdom.

I wish now to pursue these thoughts a little further. I wish to point out, in the hope that some here present will pursue the different lines of reflection into

the details of ordinary work, that the Incarnation of the Word of God becomes to us, as we meditate on the fact, a growing revelation of duties personal, social, national: that it is able by its all-pervading influence to mould to noblest ends the character of men and classes and peoples: that the interpretation of it in its bearings upon conduct, with all that it brings of obligation and encouragement, is committed to us as ministers of the English Church with unique solemnity. For while we gladly recognise the services which other Communions render to the cause of righteousness, their labours cannot lessen our responsibility. They cannot, I repeat, lessen our responsibility, but they will, I trust, more and more help us to meet it.

The meaning of the Incarnation, the central event in the life of the world, the central truth in the experience of men, in which the seen and the unseen, the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, are brought together, is not obvious at once. The treasures of wisdom which the Incarnation includes will not be exhausted till humanity has reached its consummation. God sent forth his Son when the fulness of the time was come; and, from that date onward, the belief in the Word Incarnate has been a factor in human development, growing in power through further knowledge of life. For Christianity is not a speculation or a theory. It is historical in its preparation, in its essence, in its realisation: the record and the interpretation of man's experience. The revelation which it brings is in life and of life. The Faith, in which it is embodied and through which it acts, grows as humanity grows. Each age is bound to study afresh the central fact and to trace the broadening stream of its consequences. Each age has its special problems for which the Gospel has a special

message. Men cannot recall the past and live by it. Nor again can they separate themselves from the past. What our fathers did makes our work possible and in part determines it. Under this aspect the work of each generation is disclosed by their circumstances, and we cannot mistake our own. We are required to prove our Faith in the wider fields of social life. The currency of the general conception of evolution enables us to understand much in the course of religious movements which was obscure before, and to foresee more clearly coming changes. Christianity, even when it is most individualistic, must affect society, though it may be silently. But now, in England, social questions are definitely raised as never before, and they tend to become paramount. As this age has been an age of physical science so the next is likely to be an age of social science.

It is then of vital importance that we, as ministers of the Church, should approach social problems from a Christian point of sight. If we believe in the Fall and the Redemption and the Mission of the Spirit, the belief, so far as the belief is realised, must affect our judgments, our actions, our hopes. And we must vindicate our belief in deed ; for as Christians we hold, and all experience goes to confirm our conviction, that we are not set on earth to contemplate passively an evolution wrought out about us and in us, but to be soldiers on a battle-field, charged to prepare and hasten the coming of the Lord. Further knowledge of the conditions by which our action is limited does not lessen the claims of duty but tends to guide us to more fruitful endeavours. A vivid perception of a purpose surely fulfilled according to our observation does not deprive us of childly trust in Him Who works before our eyes. The observed facts of evolu-

tion do not dispense with the thought of God. Nay rather, they postulate His action—to speak in the language of men—as the simplest hypothesis to explain, or more truly to describe intelligibly, the progress which they represent. But at the same time they suggest that something has impeded and marred the course of the progress which they establish. There is, when we regard events on a large scale, a growing order: that is a witness—to speak again in the language of men—to the wisdom and love of a Sovereign Will. There is, when we look for the moment without us and within us, an unceasing conflict: that is the witness to man's self-assertion. Fixing our thoughts upon humanity, we see with increasing clearness, when we contemplate our powers, our aspirations, our failures, an ideal towards which we are made to strain; and experience shews that by ourselves we cannot reach it. None the less we persist in our effort; and the Gospel comes to encourage and to sustain us.

But that we may find and use the power of the Gospel, we must realise it in its whole essence and scope. We are not Theists. Our commission is not simply to call on men to believe in God, but to believe in God manifested in the flesh. By the Incarnation God is revealed to us as "the Father," so as to give validity to our human conceptions of His perfection. By the Incarnation he enters through His Son into the world of Nature and delivers us from the tyranny of materialism. By the Incarnation He makes known to us the spiritual basis of life in virtue of which man in the fulness of his nature is shewn to be capable of fellowship with God.

But while the Incarnation "brings all heaven before our eyes," it guards us from a dreamy mysticism. It hallows labour and our scene of labour. It claims the

fullest offering of personal service. It embraces all men in the range of its greatest hope, and not only those who have reached a particular stage of culture. It enables us to reverence with a sublime faith, which experience has amply justified, men as men ; for we believe that *Christ is the Saviour of the world* (St. John iv. 42) : that it is the will of God that *all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim. ii. 4) : that it was *His good pleasure to reconcile through Christ all things unto Himself having made peace through the blood of His cross, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens* (Col. i. 20).

All men and all being therefore come within the range of the Christian's hope ; and our most frequent prayer—*Thy kingdom come*—reminds us that the Lord presents earth as the scene of our consummation. As His ambassadors we need to assert His claim to be creator and heir of the universe (Heb. i. 2). The apostolic portraiture of the Master, as *He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil* (Acts x. 38), must be the pattern of the disciples' labours. To us also, when we are lost in vain speculations on the mysteries of the Divine working, the words come : *Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?* (Acts i. 11.)

We need this awakening summons to that which we may think secular work. It has happened now and again that our hesitation has prejudiced the popular estimate of our Faith. There is unhappily a true sense in which the common people have not heard us gladly. They think, however wrongly, that we are either ignorant of their trials or indifferent to them. In the mean time, while we have hung back, others have sought to bring expression and fulfilment to the generous desires of our race. Their work has been outwardly Christian in type, but they have lacked the

spiritual foundation of the Christian Faith. Where they have failed, and all merely material reforms must fail, their ill-success has tended to discredit our efforts. It cannot but discredit them until we make our motive and our aim clear. This we can do and this we are bound to do. For us each amelioration of man's circumstances is the translation of a fragment of our Creed into action, and not the self-shaped effort of a kindly nature. It answers, as we believe, to the will of God; and the faith which quickened the purpose is sufficient to accomplish it. Our perfect exemplar exists already. Our citizenship—the type of every social privilege and duty—exists in heaven (Phil. iii. 20). That ideal underlies, limits, transfigures, our earthly citizenship. For us "love" is no vague impulse, but the mature fruit of that "love of the brethren," which grows out of the common acknowledgment by Christians of their vital union with one Saviour (2 Pet. i. 7). The "brother" in the Epistles of St. John, whose language has been transferred to attractive common-places, is the fellow-Christian and not the fellow-man. The truth which the Apostle emphasised is consequently in danger of being forgotten. We all need to recognise more fully than we have yet done the Divine fellowship of Christian with Christian before we can rightly discharge our wider duties.

For we all have wider duties. The capacity for influence is given to us, and we are charged to use it. Under three memorable images the Lord describes the office of Christians and of the Christian Church to men at large. *Ye are*, He said to His disciples gathered round Him, *the salt of the earth*: *Ye are the light of the world*. And again, *The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened*.

Every phrase requires to be carefully weighed. In the ministry of the Gospel there is work for the individual ; and there is work for the society. There is a work of preservation, of enlightenment, of transformation. Things in themselves corruptible and transitory receive from Christians in Christ that which brings to them soundness and permanence. Dark mysteries in society and nature are illuminated for believers, who are commissioned to spread the light which they welcome. The unordered mass of human energies is capable of transfiguration, and the Christian Society, so far as it is faithful to itself, silently and slowly extends on every side its quickening force. The Incarnation—to connect these duties with their source—carries with it all that is requisite for the fulfilment of the Divine counsel of creation : the power of the Resurrection, the glory of the Ascended Christ, the life which He breathed into His Church.

The fact, as I have already said, is slowly apprehended. The consequences are slowly realised. Yet there is a movement towards the divine goal. The conquests of the first three centuries—the successive conquests of the family, the schools, the empire—typify on the scene of the Old World the conquests which have to be won on a much larger scale in the New World. Something has been already done, but we have still much to learn in order that we may do our part.

Christian ideals have not yet taken a dominant place in our higher education ; though I believe that it is becoming more and more clear that these alone satisfy the aspirations of the masters of ancient Greece and bring into life the theories which they formed apart from life.

In social action we are all tempted to acquiesce in

that which is "lawful." We consider what we may "lawfully" do without incurring civil penalties and not what we ought to do. But civil law is no rule of positive duty. Its symbol is "thou shalt not" and not "thou shalt." And for the inspiration of conduct we require to consider what a quickened sense of duty prompts us to aim at, rather than what a code forbids.

In international affairs a narrow "patriotism" often hinders us from looking at the permanent issues of a policy suggested by present interests or pride.

We have then, I say, much to learn. The Christian Faith covers all life—the personal life, the life of the citizen and the life of the man. Each least and nearest interest gains in intensity as a wider interest is acknowledged. As Christians therefore we are bound ourselves to study and, as far as we may be able, to lead others to study the Christian ideal of our personal relations, of our class relations, of our national relations; and then to determine the next step which we can take in each direction towards it. This is the thought which I desire to master and to enforce. The Church of Christ has still the right, or rather the duty, of "binding and loosing," of declaring with authority what must and what must not be done. The commission given to the Apostles may have been allowed to fall into abeyance but it has never been revoked. It can be exercised in other ways and more effectively than by the decrees of Councils. That it should be exercised is a pressing need of an age when all men alike claim freedom of judgment and have equal political power. That we in our measure may be enabled to exercise it, we must seek anew the insight, the faith, the courage, which a vital acceptance of the Incarnation will bring to us.

I.

A modern writer commences a sombre essay on the prospects of humanity with these words: "A ruined temple, with its fallen columns and broken arches, has often been taken as a suggestive type of the transitory nature of all human handiwork.... Soon the building follows the builder to an equal dust, and the universal empire of Death alone survives over the tombs of departed glory and greatness." In this view nothing is suggested beyond man's effort and man's failure. The same image is used by one of the greatest Puritans of the 17th century and made radiant with hope. "The stately ruins," Howe writes of the soul of man, "are visible to every eye, that bear in their front, yet extant, this doleful inscription: *Here God once dwelt.* Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure to show the Divine presence did sometime reside in it.... The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned: the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour." Perhaps we may think that even here the picture is too darkly painted; but, though it be so, Howe goes on to show how God Who had designed that first temple completed through the Incarnate Word the work which He had begun. Thus we are raised above man both in the conception and in the consummation of his powers.

The two passages bring out vividly the contrast between the non-Christian and the Christian idea of humanity. For the non-Christian there can be no certainty of assurance in the prospect of the desolations of the world. For the Christian, the Incarnation proclaims that the Gospel of Creation has been fulfilled

in fact and moves forward to a complete accomplishment. The first words which the Lord taught His disciples to use, "Father" (Lk. xi. 2), "Our Father, which art in heaven" (Matt. vi. 9), express briefly what the Incarnation has wrought for us as men. They invest us with a privilege of divine sonship which finds no place in the Old Testament. The words are a prophecy, an interpretation, a promise. They point to a personal relation between God and man which each man is set to realise in life: they shew that we share this potentially with all other men; and the fact that Christ charges us to claim the double fellowship, fellowship with God ("Father") and fellowship with man in God ("*our* Father"), is an assurance that through His help we can obtain it. So then we face our work, sons of God, brothers of men; and this double master-thought—one thought in two aspects—will help us in dealing with our personal duties in regard to ourselves and in regard to others, as heirs of God's love and called to fulfil a human ministry.

It is indeed impossible to draw a sharp line between these two spheres of personal and social effort and action. It is impossible for anyone to confine the effects of what he does or leaves undone to himself alone. If he withdraws himself into a desert and spends his years in completest isolation, he defrauds his fellow-men of the fruits of the large heritage which he has received from the past. In the stir of action every man at every moment influences others, consciously or unconsciously, limiting and moulding them, scattering seeds of thought and deed which will be fruitful of good or evil while time lasts. If the solitary ascetic is to justify himself he must shew—and there are times perhaps when this would be possible—that his impressive protest against the spirit of his age is

worth the cost at which it is made. If the man of affairs is to justify his life of restless enterprise, he must not appeal to material results but to the signs of character strengthened and purified. The responsibility of living might well appal us by its immeasurable issues, but as children we can rest gladly in our Father's will. This then is that which we are constrained to seek for in our personal relations through our faith in the Incarnation, a recognition of common divine Sonship and "equal" spiritual brotherhood. It is a familiar claim; but perhaps it has lost much of its force because we have ceased to reflect upon it ourselves and to press it upon others. We assume that the claim is acknowledged, and we neglect to consider the fact by which it is established. For when seen in this light, as the application to men individually of the message that *the Word became flesh*, the assertion of the Divine sonship of each man, of the human brotherhood of all men in Christ, is fitted to chasten, to guide, to inspire us: to furnish at once a solid foundation and a touchstone for our theories of social intercourse. Just so soon and so far as we regard ourselves and others "in Christ," to use St. Paul's phrase, according to the Divine counsel, we shall strive to secure for each man, as for ourselves, the opportunity of fulfilling his part in a divine society, for developing a corresponding character, for attaining in his measure to the Divine likeness. The apostolic picture will be constantly before us as our charter and our law: *There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism: one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all and in all* (Eph. iv. 4-6), ruling, uniting, sustaining.

The fundamental image of "the body" guards us from many errors. The rich energy of the whole

depends on the variety of the parts. There can be no physical or intellectual or moral equality among men as the members of the Body of Christ. Each man has his own peculiar function. Each man is heir of one past and has some unique heritage to administer and to hallow. The opportunity which we seek for him is not the opportunity of doing anything, but of doing that one thing which answers to his individuality and his place. As he does this he enters on the enjoyment of the fulness of the greater life to which he has contributed. Regarded under this aspect—the aspect of our Christian Faith—life is an opportunity for service. We are not our own. We were not only redeemed by Christ: we were bought by Him, and are His. The essence of sin lies in selfishness, self-assertion ($\pi\lambda\epsilon\omega\epsilon\xi\alpha$). Brought to this test the great questions of temperance and purity can be dealt with effectually. The virtues are positive and not negative. They are not personal but social. Any indulgence which lessens our own efficiency, or brings injury on another, is sinful. St. Paul has laid down the principles—*If because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. . . . Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God* (Rom. xiv. 15, 20). And again: *Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?* (1 Cor. vi. 15). Our work will be permanently effective when we rest on these fundamental thoughts. The most far-reaching arguments, the highest motives, are the most practical. No self-centred considerations will shield a man in temptation. But the vision of Christ will, for He will support the effort that is made in acknowledgement of a duty which is owed to Him.

False-dealing in trade and gambling can, I believe, only be overcome by the application of the same truth. They are offences against our fellowship in Christ. We must present them in this light. Nor will anyone think that such a view is exaggerated who has reflected on the reason which St. Paul gives for truthfulness. *Speak ye truth*, he writes, *each one with his neighbour, because we are members one of another* (Eph. iv. 25).

I touch on these most obvious points for I think that we commonly shrink from bringing the great truths of our Faith to bear on the trials and duties of every day. Yet commonplace events make up the staple of our lives. Our ordinary occupations must form nine-tenths of our service—our service to God and to man—and if the power of our Faith is to be felt, we require not only private devotion but open confession (1 John iv. 3). The obligation lies on the layman no less than on the clergyman. Those who believe must act as believing and because they believe. If they do so, experience tells us that they will speedily influence public opinion; and at the same time they will themselves learn to trust more resolutely to the efficacy of spiritual forces. Life, I have said, is an opportunity for service. The way of the Master is the way of the disciple, and for the most part we are in a position in which the discipline and sense of service are natural. We have no difficulty in looking to our day's work, as it is given to us day by day, as something to be done for God's glory and man's welfare in our Father's presence and through His help. So it is with the bulk of our middle class. It is otherwise with the very rich and with the very poor. In this respect extremes meet, and it is hard to say whether superfluity or penury is more unfavourable to the

realisation of the true idea of life. On the one side the pressure of conventional engagements and pleasures tends to crowd out the thought of service: on the other side the conditions of labour are such as to obscure the truth that this labour may be the service of a son.

Such contrasts, such hindrances to the Christian life, demand consideration. They raise problems which we are called to face. They involve perils against which we are bound to provide. They furnish tests of the sincerity and power of our faith. Has the parable of the manna no application here?

It is true that there can be no "equal" participation in wealth or in any concrete "good" consistent with due regard to the various capacities of men: true that the highest good of society as a whole, taking account of the future, depends on some measure of inequality in opportunities and means, corresponding to inequalities of power: true that wealth accumulated in private hands has unique power for conferring common benefits: true that a certain outward magnificence befits great offices: true that the adequate fulfilment of some duties requires exceptional provisions. But while we admit this to the full, there is a wide agreement that the present distribution of wealth in England is unfavourable to the highest general well-being of the country: that it is as perilous to the moral excellence of those who have in excess as to that of those who have not what they need: that it is unfavourable to healthy consumption by developing fictitious wants: that it establishes material wealth as the standard of success: that it tends to destroy the practical sense of the divine sonship and the spiritual brotherhood of men. Such a judgment demands anxious consideration. It may not be pos-

sible to secure at present a better distribution of wealth among us. Violent changes, we have learnt from the past, would work no lasting good. But at least we can endeavour to determine the causes which have produced and are continuing to produce a dangerous inequality, and to ascertain how they can be modified.

In the meantime there is abundant scope for private efforts on our part to secure a simpler type of living. We can habitually ask ourselves whether this or that exceptional indulgence is required for the efficiency of our service, and press the question upon others. We can at the same time endeavour to raise the standard of life among the poor. We can, using the lessons of our own experience, strive to bring back employers to live among their own people. We can multiply opportunities for sympathetic intercourse. We can perhaps do something to check the wastefulness of fashion which stimulates vanity and provokes imitation. We can help those who look only on the surface of things to understand something of the burden of great possessions. We can shew that we wish to use all whereby God has made us to differ from others not for the assertion of our superiority but for better service, *not saying that aught of the things which we possess is our own.*

Such duties lie upon us first. The clergy have exceptional knowledge of the circumstances of the poor, and, through that knowledge, exceptional motives for endeavouring to secure them a stable and honourable position. They have at the same time natural opportunities for meeting the wealthy. These opportunities they are bound to use for the accomplishment of their ministry. At the same time they are under no obligation which is not equally binding on

the laity, and they need at every point lay counsel and cooperation. Such sympathy and help they must claim in the interest of all alike.

It is a commonplace that Christianity has recognised the dignity of manual labour, as true service of children of God. But can we shew that we have carried the conviction into life? Can we shew—I do not say that the influence of our Faith in drawing Christians together is stronger, with a simple and natural dominance, than the influences of class and education and taste in separating them, but—that the acknowledgment of brotherhood in Christ leads the mass of our countrymen to inquire into the conditions under which the majority of those whom they call brethren actually live? How few, for example, realise the moral and physical dangers of different kinds of employments. How few take account of the cost at which their necessary wants are satisfied, or their amusements provided. How few pause to estimate the loss of life in many occupations which might be prevented if only attention were fixed upon the facts, and the resources of science patiently brought to bear upon the problems which they suggest. An American writer ventured to say that railways are laid on men for sleepers. Even this exaggeration will repay reflection.

For it is to the simplest and the broadest aspects of the life of the poor and not to accessories that attention ought to be directed, to the hours of work rather than to the hours of recreation.

A man's daily labour is the chief element in determining his character. It is by this he serves, and by this he grows. It is substantially his life, to be begun and ended, day by day, in the name of God. Thus the labour question is in the fullest sense a religious

question. The workman is commonly said to offer his work in the market as a commodity. In fact he offers himself. If then the conditions of labour are not such as to make a true human life possible for the labourer, if he receives as the price of his toil a mutilated and impoverished manhood, there can be no lasting peace: there can be no prevailing Christian Faith. For a true human life the essential external requisites are adequate food, shelter, leisure, and provision for incapacity or old age. Are we English Churchmen—clergy and laity alike—satisfied that, speaking generally, these are found among our poorer artisans? Nay rather, is it not too plain that they are not found? It is stated on good authority that only one-third of our population are able to live in decent comfort. It is certain that great numbers have no reserve of means, and are unable to make adequate provision for incapacity or old age.

I have no wish to exaggerate the shadows of modern life. "There are two ways," it has been most wisely said, "of looking even at mere figures...." It may "with some show of reason be regarded as not so very bad that a tenth of the population should be reckoned as very poor in a district so confessedly poverty-stricken as East London; but when we count up the 100,000 individuals, the 20,000 families, who lead so pinched a life among the population described, and remember that there are in addition double that number, who if not actually pressed by want, yet have nothing to spare, we shrink aghast from the picture." Still we must calmly face it; and we have yet to learn how far it represents the condition of our own great towns, of Sunderland and Gateshead, of Shields and Hartlepool, of Darlington and Stockton. To

contemplate such a state of things even afar off is surely to be constrained to leave nothing undone to amend it, relying on God's will for His people, and the unexhausted and untried resources of the Gospel.

There was a time when Economists would have said that such an effort was hopeless. Wider experience has taught us another lesson. The institutions of society and the motives of men which determine the facts summarily described as "economic laws" are liable to alteration. Forms of inheritance, of land-tenure, of cultivation, of industrial processes and remuneration, influence the distribution of wealth. These have been changed in the past, and are still liable to change. On the other hand men are stirred to energetic action by other impulses than the hope of gain. And these may be called hereafter into wider play. The power of love, the power of the Incarnation, has hitherto hardly been invoked as the sovereign principle of Christian action.

We are bound, as teachers, to consider social problems in their largest range, but our own peculiar duties lie within a definite region. And however widespread the evils may be with which we have to contend, our part can best be done by dealing with them locally as they are found among us, by patient personal intercourse, guided by intelligent sympathy. At present our strength and the strength of our fellow-workers is dissipated in fragmentary and spasmodic and ill-proportioned efforts. The first requisite for steady and continuous work is full knowledge of the facts; and I trust that some combined endeavour will be made, with as little delay as possible, to ascertain in detail the facts as to the housing of the poor in the Diocese of Durham—and in this I would include the provision on shipboard for our seafaring

people—their methods of purchase, their hours of labour, their provision for old age: how far existing laws are known or enforced: how far existing helps are used. I do not ask the clergy to undertake these wide enquiries. They are already overburdened. But I ask that they invite the laity to undertake them. Every parish can help. Many who are not of our own Communion will, I believe, heartily cooperate in a work in which all Englishmen are alike interested. And when the facts are known, I believe that those who differ on many points will find ways opened for hearty fellowship in solving the problems which they suggest.

In seeking your help, your help as ministers of Christ, for obtaining the exact knowledge of the material condition of those who are committed to your charge, as the basis for necessary reforms, I do not confound the external conditions of good with good. I do not suppose that material improvements can regenerate men or that outward well-being can satisfy them. But I do say that we cannot realise what our Faith is, or teach others to realise it, unless we strive according to our opportunities to secure for those whom we acknowledge to be children of God and members of Christ opportunities of self-development and service corresponding to our own. I do say that it is the office of those to whom the message of the Gospel is entrusted to make it known in its apostolic breadth and power. I do say that certain outward conditions must be satisfied before a true life can be enjoyed: that our life is one and that each part affects the whole: that, if the conditions of labour for the young are such as to tend necessarily to destroy the effects of a brief and crowded education, if the energies of men are exhausted by a precarious

struggle for food and shelter, if there is no quiet leisure for thought, if the near future is clouded, as often as thought is turned to it, it is vain to look for a vital welcome of the Faith which deals with the future through the present, and claims the life that now is as well as that which is to come. The teaching of the Lord on spiritual reformation, like the teaching of the prophets, was accompanied by active solicitude for the external bettering of the multitudes *distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd* (Matt. ix. 36). At the same time the Gospel must be preached in its spiritual simplicity and directness and power. Sin must be shewn to be the spring of sorrows and the sting of death. He to whom we appeal as a child of God, must be led to his Father: he whom we claim as a brother, must be taught to look to Christ, through whose Life and Death and Resurrection validity has been given to the title. The power to which we appeal is a Divine kinship. Till this is acknowledged with its corresponding duties our work is not done.

So far I have spoken only of single workers—of the relation of man to man, as sons of God and brethren, but the family and not the man is the unit of humanity; and it is a significant fact that the first converts in Europe were families, “Lydia and her household,” and “the jailer and all his.” In our schemes of reform the family has too often been forgotten; though we need, I think above all things, to labour for the restoration or development of simple family life. Legislative changes have tended to weaken the sense of home responsibility. Many popular institutions break up the fellowship of the hearth. If it be said that such fellowship is impossible, I can only answer that if it be so, our state is condemned. It is in the family that the

future of a people is shaped. Each true home is a kingdom, a school, a sanctuary. The thirty years of silent unnoticed labour at Nazareth teach us, if we ponder over the meaning, what the home may be and in God's counsel is.

The lessons and the duties of the family belong to the rich in some sense even more than to the poor. But indeed every thought on which I have touched concerns, if it be in different ways, rich and poor alike. Every question which I have raised claims an answer from every Christian first in the silence of the soul and then in the market-place and in the council-chamber. The equal dignity, the equal destiny of man as man is a thought due to the Gospel which each generation has to master in dealing with its own problems. Differences of culture or place or wealth are opportunities for characteristic service. They exist only for the welfare of the body, for the fulness of the life in which every member shares. Among Christians *there can be*, St. Paul tells us in comprehensive language which covers the great types of distinction among us, race, social condition, sex, *neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus* (Gal. iii. 28).

II.

Hitherto I have considered only our personal relations one to another under the necessary conditions of life. We are at our birth severally members of a family. We are to the end citizens of a state. No seclusion can free us from the responsibility of influence. Our life is from first to last social. As Christians we are "one man in Christ Jesus," and in this fellowship we gain the unity which is prepared for all.

Recognising this larger life I have endeavoured to shew that our Faith constrains us to strive after the realisation of our brotherhood with our fellows and to secure our own highest good by using our special endowments for the general welfare : to seek for others as for ourselves the opportunity of most effective service : to endeavour to understand truly the circumstances and feelings of those who depend on us and on whom we depend : to recognise that we are "our brothers' keepers."

But if we regard society at large we see that groups of men are difference no less than individuals ; and the fundamental harmonies of the home lead us to expect that these differences will be permanent. As it is, the nation consists not only of citizens and families, but also of classes. These are shaped and bound together by a common history, by common traditions, interests, duties ; and they represent permanent types of service. Philosophers who have framed ideal commonwealths have recognised that the coexistence of distinct classes is necessary for the general well-being. Early rulers stereotyped them and fenced them round with impassable barriers, though it is a lesson of hope that in the oldest and most permanent Empire in the world free passage from class to class has always been allowed. Going back then to the image of the body, we can truly say that as the nation is one body, so, on this larger scale, the different classes are members of it. That which holds good of the whole Church, holds good of the Christian nation : *all the body fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.*

Here then again as Christians we are bound to seek for the greatest human efficiency of each class as of each man : to seek that each class shall fulfil its office under conditions which are favourable not only to life but to good life. In the Christian state every group of workers ought to be able to take a recognised and honourable place in the whole body. So the social aspect of work will bring to all work equal dignity.

It has been said that states grow rich only by labour, even as character is rightly shaped by it. The statement is true in the material sense if we take account of the past no less than of the present ; of intellectual, moral and spiritual labour no less than of manual labour. But the workman becomes less and less able to claim any result as his own according as society becomes more and more complex. All work depends on fellowship and serves to support it. If we look to the essential relations of things, the material reward of work is the provision that it may be done : the end of work is the general welfare. The true wealth of states is men and not merchandise. The true function of government is to watch over the growth of good citizens. Material wealth exists for the development of man not man for the acquisition of property. This principle has in fact hitherto ruled our social legislation, which has been influenced more by moral than by economic considerations. Our legislation has been, in other words, essentially if unconsciously Christian ; and now our aim as believers in the Divine life of the nation must be to secure, as far as possible, that our national inheritance shall be made fruitful as it is distributed in many parts throughout the people, and that each worker shall be able to thank God for the joy of his own task and the share which he has in the common life. To this end

we shall not seek to equalise material riches but to hallow large means by the sense of large responsibility: not to palliate the effects of poverty but to remove the causes of it: not to dispense with strenuous and even painful effort but to provide that labour in every form may be made the discipline of noble character.

If we look around we must confess that we have hardly faced the problem which is thus set before us. We have just emerged from an industrial revolution. Old ties have been removed. The new ties have not yet been shaped. The spirit of individualism is still invoked to justify boundless self-assertion; and even self-interest is insufficient to restrain ruinous competition. Such anarchy can only last for a brief space. Already we welcome on every side generous if impatient efforts to establish among us a social order more conformable to the facts of Divine sonship and human brotherhood. Nor need we be disheartened if discontent increases at the time when there is a growing desire to remove the evils by which it is aroused. Education cannot but stir new wants by awakening new capacities; and if these take a material form at first, it is because we have not shown that the highest and most satisfying pleasures are independent of great possessions.

What then shall we do as ministers of Christ—this is the question which we have to ask—to hasten the advent of the better order? How shall we in the exercise of our office prepare the ready acceptance of new duties answering to the new conditions of capital and labour, of owners, employers and artisans?

The first and the most obvious answer is that we shall use our unique power for promoting mutual understanding between different classes. We touch,

as I have said, each extreme in the social scale. We have the opportunity of knowing directly with what disastrous issues, words, motives, feelings, are misinterpreted on this side and that. Our greatest industrial danger lies in the want of mutual confidence between employers and employed. Confidence is of slow growth. It comes most surely through equal intercourse. This in some forms we can further. We are above the suspicion of partisanship. We can encourage the fullest expression of opinion from the advocates of rival causes. We can sometimes invite an interchange of conflicting views.

But it is through fellowship in the highest work that we learn best how much those have in common who seem to be most widely separated by circumstances. And after thirty-five years I look with growing trust for the formation of little bands of Christian workers in every Diocese or even in every Rural Deanery united for common service—"brethren and sisters of the common hope"—taken from every class, who by fellowship in aim and labour and devotion shall bring together many hearts.

Such associations, growing out of our own circumstances and needs and aspirations, not artificial imitations of brotherhoods framed to meet the conditions of earlier times, would, I believe, interpret the Faith with a new power and reveal believers to themselves. They belong no less to a highly developed than to a primitive form of Christian society. They belong especially to periods of great change, and bring satisfaction to the spirit of sacrifice and the spirit of devotion which these tend to awaken. If the leader arise among us, followers will not be wanting.

Everything seems to be ready for the new beginning. Meanwhile we shall use—or endeavour to use

—every opportunity which is offered to us in ordinary life for learning the feelings and aims of employers and employed, and for bringing both classes together on the ground of the common Faith.

Free and habitual intercourse between them, both personally and through their accredited representatives, will prepare the way for a satisfactory and lasting settlement of the relative claims of capital and labour on the profits of industry. It is needless to speculate on the form which it is likely to take. But already a great change has taken place in the provision of capital for industrial enterprises, which, since it brings special dangers and opportunities, requires to be noticed. The largest businesses are more and more falling into the hands of Joint Stock Companies. It is said that these already engross one-third of the commerce of England. In this sense very many of us are capitalists, not as lenders of money merely, but as partners in some industrial undertaking, sharing its fortunes and responsibilities, though we are not directly engaged in it.

The position is one which calls for serious consideration. A divided responsibility is in all cases difficult to discharge, but in this case the responsibility is so widely spread that it is practically forgotten. Shares in great companies are regarded simply as investments (like loans) without any duties of proprietorship. The whole business, with its complicated human relationships, tends to become a profit-making machine. The discussions at the Annual Meetings turn mainly upon the dividend. Expenditure which is not directly remunerative is viewed with suspicion or disfavour.

Here, then, it rests with us to apprehend ourselves and to enforce, as far as we are able, a juster view of the obligations of shareholders. We can feel the

temptation, and we can feel the opportunity. The share in a business, small as it may be, carries with it not only responsibility for the capital as property but also responsibility for the administration of it. The holder is both a trustee in regard to the sum which the shares represent, and an agent in regard to the end for which it is employed. It is his duty to satisfy himself that his money will be put to a good use, and so made to contribute to ends which are materially and morally desirable. He is bound, that is, to consider both the object of the enterprise to which he contributes and the manner in which it is conducted: to consider, in other words, the character and the conditions of the work, and even the more remote results which it may produce. The amount of the dividend, irrespective of the way in which it is earned, cannot justify his choice of the investment. He is required, as one who knows that he has received all for the common good, not only to offer duly of that which he receives, but also to be assured in his own mind that what he has is rightly employed.

The influence of a single shareholder may be slight, but even one who supports the Directorate in endeavouring to improve the conditions of labour and give those who serve an interest in the prosperity which they help to create, will direct attention to a principle and call out sympathetic support. A wide proprietorship ought to secure steady and generous consideration for workmen, and provide in due time for those larger forms of co-operation in which many see the best hope for the future.

On the other hand, the common indifference of shareholders to the conduct of that which is their own business, if only it is financially successful, and their personal ignorance of the work by which they

profit, gives plausibility to the popular charge that the capitalist uses the artisan for his own gain.

These considerations are, I repeat, of great and far-reaching importance ; and we need to weigh them both for the guidance of our own action and for the wise counselling of those who seek our advice.

It may be urged that I am pleading to a large extent for a sentiment : that the Directorates of our greatest Companies are alive to their duties, and that skilled labour is able to maintain its own cause successfully. Yet sentiment has a dominant effect on life and character ; and it makes a difference whether a result is obtained by conflict or by concert. There are also larger possibilities in the administration of great Companies to which I have pointed as deserving attention ; and there is even among skilled artisans a proportion of partially unemployed whose case is peculiarly sad. But at the same time I readily admit that the most pressing social difficulty now lies in the condition of irregular and unskilled labourers. To them we naturally turn our thoughts chiefly, for they most need help. They have suffered most acutely from the industrial revolution. They have the least capacity for combination, and the least opportunity for combining. They seem to be as yet unable to rise to a higher standard of life by their own efforts. They do not even aspire to it. Education has not stirred in them a generous discontent. They suffer in moral force from labour which is uncertain and unnaturally protracted, and the value of their labour is seriously lessened. As far as I can yet judge, they require some extended legislative protection, and, I will venture to add, some legislative coercion. There are classes which are still children, and in their case the Government must not shrink from discipline. It

cannot rightly leave uncorrected and unrestrained masses of men whose low type of life spreads corruption. It treats attempted suicide as a crime: it ought to treat "the slow suicide of idleness" as a crime no less.

Labour refuges and labour colonies, both at home and abroad, may be of good service. The experiments in Holland and Germany give warnings and encouragements. But we have yet much to learn. We have to determine particularly the right limits of public and private efforts, of coercive discipline and personal influence. And without advocating at present any special solution of the problem, I plead that we should seriously study it. England brought the problem upon us, and England must solve it. For us Durham is our school. And it will be possible, I trust, to form groups of laymen, who will patiently study its lessons: who will inquire and consult and teach: who will ascertain the number and the descent and the distribution of the skilled and unskilled: who will determine the extent and the causes of the rapid shifting of the population in some places: who will investigate in detail the causes of the pauperism which exists in the Diocese: who will trace for us in the history of the last fifty years the great lines of improvement along which we can move further with the confidence of faith.

I fully recognise the difficulties of bringing class to class in harmonious fellowship, and above all of finding a worthy place in the social body for the lowest class; but here the Gospel sustains us. For the most desolate Christ died. They, too, are part of the world which God loved. That devotion to the common good through which alone men as men can be bound together in widest and closest communion is neces-

sarily included in the Christian Faith. And what we look for, work for, pray for, as believers, is a nation where class shall be bound to class by the fullest participation in the treasures of the one life: where the members of each group of workers shall find in their work the development of their character and the consecration of their powers: where the highest ambition of men shall be to be leaders of their own class, so using their special powers without waste and following the common traditions to nobler issues: where each citizen shall know, and be strengthened by the knowledge, that he labours not for himself only, nor for his family, nor for his country, but for God.

Such a nation, "framed and fitly joined together by that which every joint supplieth," rising out of the past, new at once and yet old, would rightly embody the social spirit of Christ and prepare the Advent of the Kingdom of God.

Is it not worth working for? And will not the splendid vision, as we work, cheer us and lead us forward?

III.

We must carry our thoughts of the body and the members yet farther. Man, we believe, was broken into men that in every variety of relation he might work out his separate powers before all were summed up in the Christ. As the nation is a whole made up of classes, so the race is a whole made up of nations. This conception is at last coming into prominence in the fulness of time. The unity of the race offers the same problems, the same difficulties, the same hopes as the unity of the nation, though on a vaster scale. We can see that the several nations, in virtue of their character, their circumstances, their history, con-

tribute towards the completeness of humanity. The glory of a nation, like the glory of a citizen or of a class, lies not in supremacy but in service. A nation is great when it fulfils its office, and enables other nations to fulfil theirs. There is need of the same self-repressive, and yet self-ennobling, devotion among peoples as among men for their highest development. Here also there are those who seem unable to aspire towards a worthy ideal of human life: those whose energies appear to be exhausted in self-aggrandisement. But wherever we look the promise rises before us—*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

We must then as Christians, as believers in this great unity of life, strive that other nations, no less than our own, may be enabled to gain their full development and co-operate with us for the widest good. As Churchmen we pray for this blessing in the Litany in comprehensive words, which bring out each aspect of its fulfilment, when we beseech the Lord that He will be pleased “to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord,” unity, that they may severally command for use without internal distraction all the forces entrusted to their care; peace, that they may be free from the disasters of foreign conflict; concord, that they may combine together in generous endeavours to extend the general well-being of men. The petition in its completeness is, as far as I know, unique; and it is illustrated by a question in the service for the Consecration of Bishops. For while the Candidate for the Priesthood is asked whether he will “maintain and set forward . . . quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people,” he who is to be consecrated Bishop, seeing that in virtue of his office he must take a wider view of things and bear a heavier

responsibility, is required to "maintain and set forward . . . quietness, love, and peace among all men."

In obedience to this charge I ask you now therefore to consider the question of international peace which, if in its accomplishment it concerns a distant future, is a searching test of the scope and vitality of our own faith. If we believe the Gospel to be what it claims to be, the fellowship of nations is included in its promised victories. The final issue may be remote, but the belief that universal peace lies in the counsel of God for mankind will influence our present conduct. In this respect the language of the prophets and of the Apocalypse expresses the truth which is involved in the Incarnation. And now at length we can see, in a long retrospect, that in spite of checks and delays the whole movement of life is towards a federation of civilised nations, preparatory to the civilisation and federation of all.

Such a consummation, however visionary it may seem to be, corresponds, I say, with the course of the development both of human association and of moral ideas which we can trace in the past. As we look back, we cannot fail to notice that the social instinct which belongs to man as man has found satisfaction from time to time in widening circles, in the family, the tribe, the nation. The largest sphere of fellowship still remains to be occupied, the race. And when at last the different elements of society were harmoniously combined in the city, as it was organised in the West by the power of one life, there was a foreshadowing of this crowning fellowship of nations.

In the last century two continental revolutions have marked stages in the progress towards this largest communion of men. In the revolution of 1789 individualism found its final expression. The

inheritance from the past was lightly swept aside. Men were regarded as equal units, and a vague cosmopolitanism was taken to represent the feeling of the brotherhood of mankind. In such impoverishment of our powers and our endowments there could be no satisfaction; and in 1848 there was the beginning of a prolonged effort to secure for each people the possession of its full treasure with a view to rendering its full service. The movement was essentially a movement of nationalities, and modern Europe is the result.

Now we are reaching out to yet another change, through which the nations of Western Europe will, as I believe, be united in a close confederation, and combine to bring all the resources which they have gathered through their history to the service of the race. We understand and acknowledge as never before that nations no less than men and classes, in spite of all the disturbances of selfish ambition, must suffer together and rejoice together: that each nation has its unique endowment and establishes its greatness by the fulfilment of its mission: that each is debtor to all, alike by what it has received and by what it owes: that the end for which we look will then be reached when *the kings of the earth*, with a common devotion, *bring their glory into the city of God*.

I know the difficulties which stand in the way of such a Confederation, the temptations of pride and rivalry which distract popular feeling, the inheritance of past errors and crimes which perplexes the policy of statesmen. But if Christendom is filled with one desire, I cannot but believe that God will fulfil the purpose which He inspires. The object of sincere aspiration in one generation becomes the sure

possession of the next. If the thought of international concord is welcomed, the most powerful nations will recognise, as calm students recognise, that there is true strength and glory in generosity ; and then, when they have put aside traditional jealousies through the stronger sense of a common duty, we shall see them islanded by neutral zones in untroubled security.

For Englishmen there is an object which is still nearer. Recent experience seems to show that a general Arbitration treaty with America is within a measurable distance. There are hopes, like prophecies, which fulfil themselves. Such a hope as this we are bound as Christians to cherish. We can all at least take care, that within the range of our influence no idle or hasty or petulant word, no ungenerous judgment, shall mar it. The stable friendship of the English-speaking peoples would go far to assure the peace of the world.

The development of moral ideas, as I have said already, encourages us, no less than the progress of society, to look for the extinction of war. Little by little men have extended ever farther the claims of just consideration. A stranger is no longer an enemy. We have ceased to wish that other peoples should be like ourselves, and we honour their differences. Wars of conquest are universally condemned. The decalogue is held to have a national application. As men have been gathered in wider fellowship, sympathy has grown to match.

But it is said that the discipline which comes through military service, and the sacrifices which are required for a campaign, bring vigour to nations not unworthy of the price ; and that the sufferings of war are preferable to the torpor of cowardly and

selfish indulgence. But torpor is not peace. Peace calls for sacrifices as great as war, and offers fields for equal heroism. Peace demands courage of body and soul for the accomplishment of its works and kindles enthusiasm by the prospect of new victories. Perhaps our social evils are still unvanquished because we have not yet approached them with forces marshalled on a comprehensive plan, and stirred by the ardour of a common service. The very fact that the fulfilment of Christian duty is described under martial images helps us to feel that the conflict with evil offers scope for every virtue which ennobles war. A patient analysis of the qualities which win our admiration in the soldier proves that the horrors of active service are not required for their development. A great modern writer has taken the problem in an extreme form, and shewn that all that permanently attracts us in a character like Wallenstein is essentially Christian.

It is said again that, if we substitute arbitration for war, arbitration may miscarry. It is enough to reply that we have no security that an appeal to arms will establish a just claim. There is indeed no more reason to suppose that right as right will triumph in war than in a wager of battle. Moreover in a national controversy the question of right is rarely of easy decision. It is certainly not likely to be decided justly by "the crude, cold, cruel arbitrament" of war. And when once the contest is begun, our own experience will tell us that we think more of the establishment of our own will, than of the determination of the merits of the controversy. We pray for victory and not for the victory of righteousness. We resolve, it may be, to be generous if we succeed, but we must first establish our superiority by success. Generosity

in such a temper is a tribute to self-assertion and not to justice. If justice is indeed the supreme aim of those who engage in a national dispute, the most imperfect tribunal, which has to give its decision in the face of the world after open discussion, is more likely to secure it than contending armies. Meanwhile public opinion grows more and more powerful ; and, when there is time for reflection, it is substantially fair. Time brings redress for wrong ; and, if we look a little forward, we shall be able to discern that a nation which has submitted to what it holds to be an unjust judgment, will find ample compensation in the increase of moral strength. Even our own recent history teaches us that there are losses which after a time come to be regarded with greater satisfaction than successes which simply witness to strength.

If then a policy of peace clearly answers to the teaching of the Gospel : if it is presented to us as preparing the last stage in the progress of human fellowship : if it is, even at the present time, more likely to establish justice than war ; what can we do to advance it ?

We can avoid and discourage all language in regard to other nations which is in any way inconsistent with the respect due to their position.

We can endeavour to understand their feelings, difficulties, temptations, and not to measure them even unconsciously by the standard established for us by our traditions and beliefs.

We can adopt as the rule for our own temper the memorable clause in Penn's Treaty with the Indians which bound the contracting parties "not to believe evil reports of one another."

We can labour with patient and resolute effort to gain judicial impartiality if we are required to act as

judges in our own cause where arbitration is inadmissible.

We can keep our eyes steadily fixed upon the goal of our Faith, and move towards it, in quietness and confidence, whenever the way is opened.

We can do all this while we show that we are resolved to guard to the uttermost the heritage which we have received in trust for the race.

The enforcement of such duties becomes more important as popular power increases ; and at the same time the increase of popular power brings fresh hope. Nations are not only generous, but also, as I have said before, in great crises they respond to the claims of justice if the facts are set out clearly. I can never forget the attitude of the masses of Englishmen during the suspense in the affair of the "Trent," and when it was decided. Every one then must have thanked God that He had still kept the heart of the people whole in simple devotion to right. So it is that many popular leaders now, who do not avowedly hold the Christian Faith, have stood out boldly as champions of international peace. Their zeal may well awaken us to a sense of our duty and our power, our duty when we recall the words which, as we believe, heralded the Nativity : our power when we reflect on the Divine destiny of man. For nothing less than the conviction that *the Word became flesh* can sustain us in efforts which assume an essential equality in all who share our nature. No arguments based on material well-being are adequate to bear the strain of sacrifice. But the Gospel is. We can appeal to a Fact which gives present and permanent validity to universal instincts. If we do not appeal to it : if we do not trust it : so far we disparage it. If on the other hand we do, even with faltering, self-accusing

lips, confess it, and strive through all failures to make it the rule of our conduct and our aspirations, God Himself will use our weakness for the accomplishment of His will.

The position of England among the nations imposes upon us a peculiar responsibility in regard to the problem of peace. Our national freedom, gained through an uninterrupted period of self-development, demands some corresponding service. Our immunity from the local rivalries and temptations which trouble continental powers enables us to judge fairly, and (is it too much to hope?) to plead effectually.

The greatness of a nation is measured, I have said, not by its material triumphs but by the fulfilment of its office for humanity. The office of England is, if I interpret our history rightly, the harmonising of classes and of peoples. The result will be secured slowly. If we have the promise that we shall win our own souls by patience, there can be no other way for winning the souls of others. We know our aim and, keeping our eyes fixed upon it, we can work and wait for the abolition of war, as earlier generations worked and waited for the abolition of slavery.

The end must come by the gift of God, and therefore I will conclude what I have to say on this subject with one practical suggestion. I think we shall do well, if on some stated day—may I name the Sunday before Christmas?—we combine to turn the thoughts of our people to this largest earthly hope of peace and good-will, and lead them to offer to Him with one heart and soul and voice the familiar supplication that “He will be pleased to give to all nations unity, peace and concord,” even as on that day we pray “that He will come among us and with great might succour us,” “sore let and hindered” as we are “in running

the race that is set before us." The prayer will bring us near to those for whom we pray, near in spiritual fellowship.

The brotherhood of men, of classes, of nations : humanity fitly framed together by the ministry of every part for the realisation and enjoyment of one harmonious life : the prevailing power of devotion to a common cause : do the phrases seem visionary and unpractical ? Does then, I ask, the phrase *the Word became flesh* mean less ? Is that unpractical ? If I am a Christian, I must hold that God wills for men the highest which we can imagine. If I am a Christian, I must for my own part acknowledge the widest issues of the Incarnation and strive to establish them. I shall not be in haste or impatient ; but I shall watch the general direction of the movement of life and find in that the guidance which I need in my own labours.

At present we are beginning to recognise the influence of great ideals. They are in a true sense prophecies. Even if concrete changes are made in fact under the pressure of local and special circumstances, they are then most truly beneficent and lasting when they are made in relation to a recognised ideal. And the Christian ideal is unique in scope and power. It provides for developing and harmonising all the elements of life, and all life. It offers to us the highest which we can conceive for man in his whole nature, and for man in the widest range. It corresponds with our loftiest hopes ; and while there is no anticipation of the central Fact in which it is summed up, men have shewn in fragments through the teaching of præ-Christian religions for what they

were born. Are we then to suppose that the Christian ideal is unpractical? Are we to believe that these earlier indications of natural desires are not witnessings to the will of God, of which social evolution is the imperfect and slow expression? The thought of Providence alone makes the thought of progress intelligible.

It will be urged that men are swayed by motives which are measurable: that the conclusions which are deduced from the spirit of selfishness and competition have universal validity, as long as human nature remains the same. But are we to count only on the average motives and forces which we observe at present? The revolutions of history disprove such a conclusion. It is an exceptional thing that money—material wealth—should have the value which it has now. This value is due to the dominancy of luxury, and will sink as material indulgence loses its power. Other motives may again prevail among men to guide the use of inherited possessions and the creation of new riches. This man may set himself to study—no simple problem—how he can best make his means serve the commonwealth. That man (to take actual examples) may choose to receive less than “market value” for the superintendence of a great business. Another may decline, for a time or permanently, to receive interest for the capital which he advances. And all these, if they are able to describe their experience, will probably move others to follow their examples. If great wealth is used not simply in alms-giving but in the spirit of sonship and brotherhood through the thoughtful ministry of love, it will be used more effectually than in any other way for the amelioration of industrial life in both extremes of need and superfluity.

Religious movements have in all ages brought into play exceptional forces. The social movement which is stirred about us is essentially religious. For us it is avowedly religious, religious in its inspiration, in its strength, in its end. We also live in an age of revelation. There is still spiritual power available for us if we "believe in the Holy Ghost." We have still "the prophetic word," not an antique record hard of interpretation but a living voice speaking in the events of life, *till the day dawn and the daystar arise in our hearts.* The clergy are still a truly representative body, in touch with every class; moved by the largest variety of interests and opinions which are harmonised by one devotion; trained in full fellowship with the foremost workers in the state and above the divisions of party.

It is our part then to shew that the Church—the National Church—has a message to the Nation: that we bring with fresh conviction the fact of the Incarnation, unlimited in its application, to bear upon the problems of the time: that we believe in the victorious advance of the Christian Society (Matt. xvi. 18): that we have learnt in the family, and make it our business to proclaim the lesson, that social conduct is not ruled by the letter of the law, or by the decisions of "justice" or by the dictates of "self-interest": that the human, as distinct from the personal, element must enter into the dealings of man with man: that love must interpret and supplement the verdict of exact judgment.

Men cannot, even with a show of reason, press their "rights" to the uttermost. They ask for forgiveness as they have forgiven—forgiven that is real wrongs—foregone just claims. We have indeed "no rights but duties"; and these can never be discharged in full. In strictness of account we must remain debtors

to the end ; and through the obligations of our Faith we are debtors to all who need us.

The social changes then for which we look must be reached not by premature legislation (that is finally by force) in advance of public opinion, but through common feeling. This feeling it is our office to quicken by the exhibition of the Faith. Conduct depends upon what we believe, not indeed upon intellectual formulas, but upon our living views of man, the world, and God. In this respect the Church moulds opinion. It has by Divine appointment, as I have already said, the power "to bind and to loose," to pronounce that this is of obligation and that not : to lay down the great lines of moral duty, not negatively only but positively, in accordance with the movement of life. This she does even unconsciously. And all can assist in deepening and extending the influence by pressing quietly and persistently the duty of looking to the Faith, its motives, its restraints, its supports, in everyday conduct. Public opinion, the popular idea of right, represents the minimum (so to speak) of Christian opinion. It registers the progress of personal conviction. It finally prevails in shaping government and industry and conduct. It finds expression in effectual legislation within the sphere of law ; and outside the sphere of law it exercises a controlling force, so that things (for example) which were common a hundred or fifty years ago are now practically impossible, and corresponding changes are still silently in progress.

In order to extend the range of these effective judgments, we shall strive to concentrate and give consistency to the generous aspirations which rise on many sides towards righteousness and purity and temperance and fellowship. We shall reflect what

we can ourselves do to shew our sincerity in advocating reforms which we believe to be needful. Some of us may be able to study special questions : we shall at least spare no pains to provide that they may be studied in order that we may apply to them wisely the teachings of Christ.

And I lay great stress on the need of patient study. Our chief danger at present is from the haste of impetuous generosity. We require not only right desires but wise counsels : careful investigation, and then resolute effort. Partial and premature remedies for evils are directly mischievous and bring discouragement afterwards. We must regard each question from many sides and then at last speak what we know. Above all we must confess unwaveringly, as I have said, that the solution of our problems is to be religious. We shall welcome co-operation in our endeavours after the practical embodiment of Christian principles from whatever quarter it is given, but we shall not at any cost dissemble our own conviction that our Faith is our inspiration. The results at which we aim finally are spiritual, and these can only be reached, as we hold, by spiritual forces.

There is, I believe, good hope of a wide response to an appeal for social service. The course of the last century and of the last generation is rich in promise. Simple life is greater than we know, with "joy in widest commonalty spread." Even in things of sense it is only within a narrow range that "companionship is one with loss." Men are beginning to understand that "everything that is supremely precious is common," that labour is the bringer of all dignity and love the healer of all sorrow. "The main conditions of human happiness," writes one whose knowledge of the poor is intimate and wide, "I believe to be work

and affection, and he who works for those he loves fulfils these conditions most easily." Nor would the quickening of interest in our own home problems lessen the interest of Christians in the distant work required of them in heathen countries. The more vivid and practical apprehension of the constraining power of the love of Christ in one field must of necessity increase the sense of obligation in every direction.

For the impulse, the encouragement, the strength, which our Faith offers to us, so far as they are felt, are felt to be unlimited in their application. God, we believe, has taken humanity to Himself, and man redeemed in Christ is called to work out his destiny in reliance on the Holy Spirit. In this Gospel lies the assurance, under the circumstances of human life, that that for which we long is within our reach. We do not make the ideal : we recognise it ; and in striving for its establishment we are fellow-workers with God. In such labours the thought of the Communion of Saints comforts doubting hearts. This brings home to us naturally our Communion with God. It may well be that we shrink from the responsibility of influence while we cling to our private judgments : that we are disheartened by our failures and divisions ; and then, when we ponder the Incarnation not only in its essence but in its circumstances, we come to realise that the Incarnation of the Son of God adds to authority the grace of sacrifice, to obedience the joy of Divine Fellowship, to the energy of service the endurance of love, while it offers the sense of the presence of God as the present pledge of unity.

It may be said that these are vague words. Even so they are not vain. This is not the place for discussing details of work. Details must be dealt with in close and familiar debate. But if the Gospel in its

widest range is once acknowledged, the application will follow. It will become the inspiration of personal zeal which cannot want an object. It will encourage each worker to shew his love to his friend by claiming from him the active devotion in which he finds his own joy. And it is to indefinitely increased personal devotion, to individual ministries of love and faith, to watchful efforts of wise sympathy, we must look for the fulfilment of the work of the Spirit through the Christian Society. Every believer has his own function in the Body of Christ, and in virtue of that he is an Evangelist. The office and the shop and the factory and the ship-yard and the pit, the municipal council-chamber and the board-room of "the Union," are meeting-places with God where He can be honoured, if those whose duty lies there enter them as having welcomed the message of the Incarnation.

For if the message of the Incarnation necessarily transcends our thoughts in its fulness, none the less it comes within the range of our experience as far as our thoughts can reach. It touches life at every point, and we are bound to consider what it means for us, for our fellow-men and for the world. It is not enough to hold it as an article of our Creed : we must openly and in secret prove its efficacy in action. By our reticence, by our habitual reserve in dealing with it as the master-power in shaping and sustaining our thoughts, our purposes, our deeds, we encourage a feeling of secret mistrust as to the validity of the Faith.

In order then that we may master our message so as to deliver it with the persuasiveness of undoubting confidence, we have need of leisure, of quiet, of reflection. The strain of life is painfully intense in every direction. Impatience and excitement bring at last

the languor of indifference. The restless engagements of external religion threaten to usurp the place of spiritual worship, and traditions of living faith. Multiplied and stately services may crowd out the exercises of calm and thoughtful devotion. The outward manifestations of spiritual life may exhaust its force. In this respect the pathetic warnings of Jeremiah speak to the heart of our nation and of our Church. God grant that we may heed them while there is yet time for both to fulfil their office.

History repeats itself in its warnings and opportunities and hopes. The great hope of the first age, which burns through the New Testament, has been deferred, because the love of the first age grew cold and its faith grew feeble. Perhaps we can see that the delay was necessary because the discipline of men was not complete. In eighteen centuries we have learnt much, and the Divine promise remains unchanged and unchangeable in the Incarnation. In spite of innumerable failures the Incarnation has established on a sure foundation the trust of natural optimism. In this confidence we labour on, knowing that *He Who began will perfect.*

During the last two years I have had occasion twice to study afresh the work and the spirit of each of the greatest spiritual leaders of our Northern Church, Columba, Aidan, Hilda. And it has been an encouragement to me to notice how each under different circumstances commends as the last lesson of varied experience peace and fellowship.

“These, my little children,” said Columba, “are my last words. I charge you to keep unfeigned love one with another. If you do so after the pattern of

the fathers, God, the champion of the good, will help you....' Having said this he passed away the same night, while he made silently the sign of blessing.

Of Aidan we know that he was chosen for the Northumbrian Mission because he shewed by unpremeditated words that he was endowed with "the grace of discretion, which is the mother of virtues": a man, as Bede writes, "with a passion for peace and charity, and true priestly authority to reprove the proud and powerful, to comfort the weak and cheer the poor and uphold clemency."

When Hilda, after bearing, it is said, with thanksgiving the discipline of severe sickness, found that her end was come, she summoned her nuns and charged them to keep "the peace of the Gospel" one with another and with all men, and so "passed from death to life."

Thus our ancestors tell us with one voice that the brotherhood for which we look, the brotherhood of men, of classes, of nations, will come through spiritual fellowship. When we ponder their words, can we not feel that even now the Communion of Saints—the truth of which this glorious Chapel is a witness and a herald—is a reality? We cannot as Christians, accept the phrase "the struggle for life" as describing the true view of existence for men who are made to gain the likeness of God. In proportion as we become fit to enjoy, earth is found to be fuller of treasures, and the treasures of earth are seen to be capable of a wider distribution. In proportion as we understand the Gospel better—the Gospel which we are commissioned to proclaim in the language of our own generation—we shall see righteousness, joy, peace as the basis and the fruit of the Christian Society

(Rom. xiv. 17) in place of self-assertion, excitement, competition.

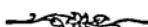
The time is short: the issue is momentous: the hope is great: the promise of God cannot fail. We know that the Son of God hath come: we look for His coming (1 John iv. 21; 2 John 7).

My last word must be the first word which I spoke when I came among you, of which I have known the power—*Brethren, pray for us.*

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