

ARTICLE V.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH.

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THE phrase "Institutional Church" is only a few years of age. Its genealogy is shrouded in the mist which so often gathers about the children of our modern philology, but behind its coining lies a movement pregnant with help for the solution of the most serious problem of to-day. That problem is the correction of the acknowledged defects of our modern social life. To this the best thought of this generation has been given. Many present-day tendencies have been deplored. Their menacing import has been clearly shown. Relief is eagerly sought. The church is asked to help, and the inquiry is earnestly made, whether it should limit its function, as it has so largely in the past, to the provision of public worship and the ministry to the spiritual nature.

The Christian heart responds to this appeal. It catches with eager welcome such words as those of Canon Freemantle describing the church as "a moral and social power, present, universal, capable of transforming the whole life of mankind, and destined to accomplish that transformation." We, as followers of Christ, accept this definition as voicing our hope and faith. But when, in the spirit of this hope, we investigate present social needs, we find ourselves facing a thorough readjustment of our ideas as to the sphere of the church and its equipment for work. Nothing makes the necessity of this change more apparent than the direct, practical examination of the conditions of life for the aver-

age young man in our great cities, where, it is well known, these social needs centre. This average young man we find living in an unattractive home or a cheap boarding-house, where there is little or no provision for pleasant society and recreation. It is evident that the strong young life has a natural and justifiable desire for these things. We cannot expect him to repress it. But where has he an opportunity to gratify it? He will not stay in his little room, hot in summer, unheated in winter. He has no talisman by which he may open the doors of some beautiful home, and, even if he had, he would not feel in place there. He sees many churches, but their doors are locked. He cannot enter if he would; or if, perchance, he finds one open, it is for the religious service, which does not attract him. He wants fun, not preaching or prayers. The library, the Central Christian Association Building are too far away for him to walk to them, and he cannot afford to ride. But at every turn he meets the invitation of the evil one. Here is the low theatre, with its blazing lights, its brass band, its exciting plays, its merry-making crowd. There is the saloon. Many of his own age are entering it. It is warmed and lighted, and within he hears the laughter of those who play at fascinating games. Here are places which want him, and enforce their invitation by providing what he is looking for. Nothing better offers. For the sake of the society and fun which he craves, he enters the doors which lead to ruin.

These are the facts—sad, simple facts in thousands of young lives. This condition of society the church, with its hope of redeeming men, is facing. This is the "world" into which she must "go." It is as clear a call as the cry of Japan or Africa. She cannot dabble in impurities because men love them, for then she would sunder her connection with Christ and become barren; but, without in any sense sullyng her purity or lowering her standard, she may, she can, she must keep in close touch with men, not ideal men,

but living, tempted, sinning men, such as swarm the streets of our cities and manufacturing towns. To keep in touch with them she must enter their "world." Until she does this, she cannot fulfil her commission. Her main business is not to amuse or entertain, but if there are men whom the devil entraps because she does not provide for the recreative and social side of life, her duty is clear. She has been giving the evil one too much of a monopoly of the social nature of those who cannot provide their own means of recreation. She will no longer allow him this advantage in the fierce battle for the souls of men. She, too, will minister, in pure and wholesome and uplifting surroundings, to the social needs. She will always keep her doors open. She will provide a counter-attraction to the saloon and the gambling den, believing that God bids her lay her hand on anything, in itself sinless, by which she can foil her enemy and reach men with her blessed influence. She is able to see no reason for doubting that, if the evil one can lead men to slavery by providing social delights, she can win them to freedom by the loving, sympathetic, attractive ministry to the same part of their nature. She will entertain that she may save.

It is well to note, also, that the success of evangelistic effort and the answer to the petitions of the church bring her face to face with the necessity for this larger ministry. God is asked to bless his Word, to lead men from darkness to light. Suppose that prayer is answered. A man who has been for ten years in the depths of vice is brought within the sanctuary. He hears the good tidings of the gospel. He is touched by the story of the cross. Dimly he sees the light, feebly he reaches out for the great salvation. What is the church to do with him? Is she to turn him into the streets, telling him to trust in God's grace to keep him, and to come around a week later for more preaching? Remember what he is. In his soul is the vivid memory

of evil. About his miserable abode the vicious swarm. The saloon is in the block where he lives, and the shouts and songs of his old companions at revelry there continually greet his ear. Is it right for the church to tell a man thus surrounded by evil, that he cannot enter the doors where the ray of light has broken upon his poor heart until days, days of temptation and weakness, have gone by? Would she not, thereby, tempt Providence? Mere exhortation, without physical and social assistance, would savor of pietism rather than piety. Loyalty to her supreme commission demands that the church should keep her doors open, so that the wanderer, whenever he seeks her shelter, may find a refuge in her kindly welcome and abounding hospitality. Locking her gateway imperils her God-given fruitage. Richly as God has blessed the preaching of his Word and the gospel in song and prayer, he has never declared that there is no other method for his people to employ. In every age he calls her to supplement these glorious agencies by any other provision which may help in saving men.

The church open seven days in the week, having in its care, and as a part of its regular work, institutions social, amusement, educational, evangelistic, for the ministry to the whole man and for the promotion of his growth in grace and knowledge and character, has been denominated "The Institutional Church." As the name is of such recent adoption, it is interesting to note how the pastors in such work define it. The phrase was, perhaps, first applied to Berkeley Temple, Boston. Its pastor, Rev. Charles A. Dickinson, gives this definition: "An Institutional Church may be defined as one which, with a suitable corps of workers, and a varied equipment, aims to educate and confirm people in the love of all that is pure and lovely and of good report. Its object is to save the whole man; and it believes that there is salvation in everything that makes a man more nearly what he is designed to be. It should begin with people just where

they are; meet the needs which they are conscious of, and so generally lead them to be conscious of needs higher and nobler. Some general lines will be friendliness and sociability, charitable aid, aid to self-help; instruction intellectual and manual; the ministry of music and art; religion pure and undefiled; the simple and urgent preaching of the deepest and most inspiring truth we can possibly attain to." Rev. J. L. Scudder, pastor of Jersey City Tabernacle, defines it thus: "The Institutional Church is one that ministers to the varied wants of man, and not to the spiritual element alone. Such wants are physical, industrial, social, mental, educational, æsthetic. It proceeds upon the principle that anything secular but sinless is religious, and uses anything that will lift men up to a better life, and shield them from temptation. Its object is to make the church a social centre every night in the week, to keep boys out of the streets and young men out of the saloons. It thus creates sympathy and confidence in young men, and wins them to the church. They attend in droves."

But no definition is worth as much in giving a true idea of the aims and methods of the institutional church as a brief outline of the actual work now in progress in some of them. Three such churches, well-known and in full operation, are, The Fourth Congregational Church, Hartford, Conn.; Tabernacle (Congregational) Church, Jersey City, New Jersey; Berkeley Temple (Congregational), Boston, Mass. An outline, embracing a description of the field, force, and methods of each, follows.

FOURTH CHURCH, HARTFORD, CONN.

Field.—Population of the city, census of 1890, 53,230. The church is situated about a quarter of a mile from the business centre, on the northern section of the main thoroughfare. Within a radius of a half-mile from its doors lies the region chiefly inhabited by the poor. The church

has no wealth in its membership. Ten years ago it was in a discouraging condition. It had well-nigh lost all heart.

Force, 1891.—(1) Two pastors, one serving without salary, being also at Hartford Theological Seminary as professor of homiletics, but frequently preaching, and giving a considerable share of his time in connection with the executive work of the church; the other doing the larger part of the preaching and pastoral work, and having constant oversight of all departments. (2) An evangelist, who reports, for 1891, 3,958 calls made, and 1,300 received by him from those seeking his aid, most of these being at the daily office hour at the church. He also reports attending 436 religious services, visiting the station-house daily, interviewing 1,200 prisoners; spending a half-day in each week at the hospital; securing employment for fifty men out of work. (3) A parish visitor making house-to-house visitation, and reporting 1,732 calls, work at the hospital and jail, and a service once a month at the Home for Friendless Women. (4) Volunteer workers from Hartford Theological Seminary, giving their labors gratis, and taking as their return the broadening of heart and the practical training in the art of reaching men under the direction of the pastors.

Methods.—The practical use of the spirit of evangelization and its application in diversity of forms to all the work undertaken. Eight prayer-meetings are held each week, some of them being in other parts of the city. The Sunday evening service is made attractive by orchestra and chorus, and direct preaching on themes bearing most directly on life, conversion, regeneration. It has a highly developed organization, including, beside the usual societies, a Yoke-Fellows Band, composed of men, themselves rescued from sin and vice, laboring together to reach others, and to that end adding to their spiritual efforts a pleasant room, open every evening, where they welcome all who come, and to which they bring those needing refuge from the temptations of the

street and the saloon. A young women's room is similarly maintained.

JERSEY CITY TABERNACLE.

Field.—A city of 163,000 people, separated from New York by the Hudson River, and containing hosts of the middle and lower classes.

Force.—(1) One pastor. (2) A superintendent of the "People's Palace." (3) Six other workers employed a part of their time as cooking preceptress, military drill master, director of gymnasium, superintendent of Boys' Department, and two other assistants. Cost of workers, \$2,500 per year.

Methods.—Many social and amusement features, combined with evangelistic effort. Two gymnasiums, one for boys and girls, another for young men and women, natatorium, baths, military drill, brass band, orchestra, an amusement hall, thirty kinds of games, billiards, sewing school, singing school, cooking classes, housekeeping classes. Total cost, \$4,000 per year. A part of the expense is raised by the fees of those who enjoy the privileges. Young men pay \$4.00 per year, with baths, billiards, and ten-pins reckoned as extras. Boys pay \$1.80 per year. Pies and temperance drinks are sold in the building.

BERKELEY TEMPLE, BOSTON.

Field.—A part of Boston which is largely occupied with the middle classes, a considerable portion being young men and women living in boarding-houses.

Force.—(1) Three ordained pastors, one for preaching and in general charge of the whole enterprise; another for the "practical Christianity" work, consultation, and a large share of executive management; a third for the visiting, pastoral work, and Sunday-school. (2) Two church visitors, working chiefly among the poor and middle classes, one of them having charge of the Dorcastry. (3) An evangelist. (4) Student volunteers from Andover Theological Seminary.

(5) A clerk for the church office. Cost for all these workers, \$6,100, besides the leading pastor's salary.

Methods.—Extensive development of organization, especially in educational work combined with evangelistic efforts. For young men, the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip (a body of young men pledged to pray and labor for the salvation of young men), reading-room, literary club, church newspaper, athletic club, outing club, lectures and entertainments. Special club for boys. For girls, Dorcastry, sewing school, Society of Home Makers, kitchen-gardening class, talks on reading. In educational work, for all classes, hygiene, German, grammar, arithmetic, book-keeping, penmanship, painting, crayon drawing, clay modelling, dress-making, millinery. Also a relief department, employment department, justice of the peace. The regular services are made attractive by the finest of music, responsive exercises, and direct, strong, practical preaching. All seats are free. Total cost including workers, \$16,000 to \$20,000 per year. Of this amount about \$10,000 is provided by the church itself, and the rest comes from neighboring churches.

With these facts in hand we are in a position to note certain well-marked attributes of the movement. First, it is clear that when the phrase "Institutional Church" is used, it does not imply any definite kind of field or force or method. Each of these churches is a contrast to each of the others in many respects. Each may be said to represent a different type of institutional effort. The Fourth Church represents exceptional and extensive evangelistic development, Berkeley Temple represents educational work, Jersey City represents the large employment of social and amusemental features. But while we note this difference in methods,—a difference growing largely out of the needs of the different localities, we should observe that they agree in the effort to provide, as far as possible, for the "whole man." Three principles they have in common: (1) They accompany the

regular preaching by strong evangelistic effort, choosing themes calculated to lead to conversion, presenting them in direct, forceful, simple fashion, and following the evening service by an after-meeting. Two of the three employ an evangelist. All of the pastors are themselves possessed of a rich evangelistic spirit. (2) They keep the doors open all the week. No man finds these churches locked at any reasonable hour. They are the home of the rescued, the refuge of the tempted, the centre of opportunity for Christian workers, the meeting-place of Philip and Nathanael, those who have seen the Saviour and those who know him not. (3) They aim to provide for the social needs as far as their financial power permits. None of them regard their equipment as at all adequate to the work growing up about them. They feel that they have an absolute call to give facilities in up-building to the scores they are winning to the Master. They are already doing much. Their appeal for help in enlarging equipment is based upon results already attained.

Using these churches as typical, it is fair to ask, whether they fulfil their purpose. They aim to attract youth from evil, and then to lead them to Christ, using every method to this supreme end. Is this aim realized in definite results? Before answering, it should be stated that all of them have taken up institutional work within a short time. Berkeley Temple began it about four years ago, the Fourth Church has been engaged in it five or six years, although its evangelistic methods have covered in their gradual development about ten years; Jersey City Tabernacle opened its "People's Palace" in November, 1891, and may be said to have developed its chief work within four or five years. Naturally it will take time to make the strongest impression upon such communities as these churches are trying to reach, and the largest results are yet in the future. But even now they are remarkable.

In order to ascertain accurately what fruit the institutional

movement was bearing, a series of questions was sent to the pastors of the three churches mentioned, and the following remarkable replies were received:—

The question was asked, "Has institutional work attracted young men hitherto under the influence of the saloon?" Unanimous reply, "Yes." One adds, "Yes, powerfully, thank God! This amusemental competition is the worst blow the saloon has ever had in America. It cuts away its constituency, present and future." It is fair to state that this church makes the price of games one-half that charged by saloons.

"Has it attracted any large number of young men or young women not having any family connection with the church?" Unanimous answer, "Yes." Mr. Scudder replies, "Neither dozens nor scores would express the income to our enterprise."

"Has it attracted working-men?" Unanimous reply, "Yes." Fourth Church pastor affirms that almost all in his church are working-men and working-women.

"Has your institutional work given marked results in rescuing the fallen?" Two reply, "Yes." The third answers, "Indirectly. This is not rescue work properly speaking. It improves manners and morals, per force. Men must behave to enjoy the privileges. We get acquainted with them, call them by their first names; they join our Bible classes, Endeavor Society, etc. We prevent from falling by holding men and women to the church. The Institutional Church is peculiarly a preventive institution."

"How many patronize your gymnasium weekly, on the average, from November to April?" The pastor of the only church having a gymnasium replies, "Twelve hundred."

"How many come to the reading-room weekly" (average)? One replies, "One hundred;" another, "Four hundred and fifty."

"How many come to the recreation rooms" (weekly

average)? One replies, "One hundred and fifty;" another, "Fifteen hundred to two thousand."

"How many come for industrial training" (weekly average)? One replies, "Two hundred." The others do not have facilities yet for this branch of work.

"How many are in attendance at popular lectures weekly?" One replies, "One thousand on the average;" another, "Can fill the house, twelve to fourteen hundred people, at any time, if we charge only ten cents."

From these responses comes the undeniable proof that this movement, as far as it is represented by these churches, is realizing already at least one part of its object. It is reaching the masses. Mr. Scudder says: "No need of talking about teaching the masses any longer; we have the masses already. We have more masses than we know what to do with. When we opened our Boys' Club we had five hundred and seventy applications in less than a week, and then we quit giving out any more, for fear of a Johnstown flood of juvenile humanity. We could not accommodate all who want to come if we had four times the room."

"But do these churches succeed in leading those whom they reach in institutional work to the cross of Christ?" "Will not the provision of amusements lower the spiritual tone of the church?" Here are the direct answers to such inquiries. Mr. Scudder says: "Institutional work has increased the spiritual tone of the church decidedly. Evangelism was never so earnest as now. We feel that immortal souls cannot be fed on Indian clubs. Salvation is everything. All else must lead up to it. Institutional work has tremendously increased the congregation. On Sunday evenings we have 1,000 to 1,200 and as many as 300 of this number are young men. It has increased the young men's Bible classes, captivates them by being so sympathetic and whole souled, has flooded the Junior Endeavor Society, increased the church membership, made the weekly prayer-meeting larger than ever in the history of the church."

Jersey City Tabernacle increased its resident membership from 260, on Jan. 1, 1886, to 618, on Jan. 1, 1891, and the families numbered in its constituency from 300 to 450.

Berkeley Temple had, Jan. 1, 1888, 305 resident members; Jan. 1, 1891, it had 471, receiving in three years 313 members, 123 on profession of faith. In 1891 it received 144 more, 63 on profession. The Sunday-school in the three years 1888-91, increased from 373 to 871. The general spiritual tone of the church and its Christian activity have gained more than any statistics can portray.

Rev. Graham Taylor, D. D., pastor of Fourth Church, Hartford, says: "Evangelistic and institutional work has not only increased, it has almost created, the spiritual tone. Three Christian Endeavor Societies have grown out' of it, eight weekly prayer-meetings, all well sustained, in place of two feebly supported. More than half our membership and two-thirds our evening attendants are young men and young women. Fully one-half of the attendants on all our services taken together are male, whereas the audience used to be three-fourths female. Male membership is almost exclusively made up of manual workers, mechanics, clerks, and laborers; and there are many working-women. Fifty-four men in our membership have been redeemed, most of them from hopeless inebriety, and some from the so-called incorrigible class of criminals. All but two of these are in good standing and active fellowship with us or have died triumphantly in the faith. The period through which they have maintained their integrity varies from one to ten years. The gradually transforming influence of the new environment which the Christian place, associates, social and recreative influences, and strong, predominating spirituality of purpose, create and maintain, has been (next to the power of a Christ-possessed personality) the most constant and effective human agency in the salvation and sanctification of those rescued from the depths."

Fourth Church, Jan. 1, 1887, had 337 resident members;

Jan. 1, 1891, it had 519. Its total membership, Jan. 1, 1892, was 675, 112 having been received the previous year and 571 in ten years, 323 by confession, chiefly from non-church going families. The net gain in ten years was 385, and in the last year alone, 82. Families, in 1882, 200; now, 600. Sunday-school, in 1882, 305; now, over 900. Sunday evening congregations, in 1882, less than 100; now, nearly 800.

The intelligent observer will note that these figures have unusual significance. These churches are not borne on the wave of an increasing population. The constituency of those usually counted as church supporters has, in at least two of the three churches, been lessening. They have drawn their increase largely from ranks which the average church hardly touches. In view of these circumstances, it may fairly be said that even if all methods employed may not be approved by every observer, the results vindicate the movement, for they show that its purpose of winning to Christ those who have stood aloof from the church, is already attained.

It is evident that the success of these churches and others like them is to have a powerful influence both upon the church and the people. In thinking of what the institutional church is, and what it is destined to effect, it is not contended that in all minor details the present examples are above criticism. They are now in their early stages. The perfect form is yet to come. But whatever strictures we may make, no one can fairly condemn the movement because he believes a given church adopts some questionable method, any more than we condemn all evangelistic work because some evangelist is repugnant to us in his preaching. In each case principles are far greater than men or methods.

It is not denied that the institutional church is exposed to danger. No movement, in the history of the world's advancement, however great its power to bless mankind, has been exempt from peril. It is not difficult to see that the

church which takes up such work as this must guard itself against secularization. It can only safely engage in social and amusemental efforts, when it magnifies the spiritual. It must accompany evangelistic labors with carefully devised plans and agencies for Christian nurture. It will be tempted to multiply organizations beyond its power to sustain them. In the enthusiasm of its noble endeavor, it will need to guard itself from financial extravagance.

But while we recognize these dangers and give them due weight, we may safely affirm that the movement is of great value to the church at large. Certain definite lines of helpfulness are apparent.

1. It shows that the supposed chasm between the church and the masses can be easily bridged. Whatever doubt one may have about methods—there is no question that these churches have succeeded in reaching the people. What has been done in these places can be done elsewhere. No church is to attempt to make itself the counterpart of one of these; but their success shows that if any church, with a constituency sufficiently strong and with a population to be reached sufficiently large, will be true to the principles of the institutional movement, adapting methods to local needs, it may expect to see its hopes and prayers and efforts crowned with success.

2. It provides a definite plan in seeking to reach the people. For many years the cry has been going up on all sides—"The masses are not reached—how shall they be brought to church? How shall they be touched with the story of the gospel?" Before this question many a church has agonized, and its chief difficulty has not been, at least in many cases, the lack of willingness to do something, but ignorance or doubt as to what to do and how to do it. If only some method, shown to be practicable, could be brought forward, money would be forthcoming and men would volunteer for extra service. Here is a method. Here is the

demonstration of its success in other places. Here is something definite to do. The church of to-day is stirred to its depths by the discovery, and the next few years are to see a marvellous development in this direction.

3. It exalts to its proper place the great commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The church is not to be satisfied to let sons and daughters go from country homes to the great centres, to cast about among the devil's traps for their only recreation. She is going to see that when the Lord gave her the great commission, he included in the charge the ministry to the *whole man*, so that the work of Sunday should not be neutralized by the inactivity of Monday and so that the teaching of the pulpit and the songs and prayers of the holy day should not be rendered ineffective through the coldness, the silence, the bolts and bars, of the church in the week. This movement is to help in telling the men that the church of the Lord is for all, the working-man as well as the rich man. It will banish, as far as its spirit is really felt, all obtrusive private ownership in the Lord's house, and will bring in its place such a spirit of hospitality and friendliness and generous helpfulness, that no man who cheers the name of Christ will ever again, we hope, have heart to curse the church, as some men did not long ago. It will break down the prejudices of the people. They want deeds, not words—they want direct sympathy, not the mere expression of it in sweet-sounding phrases. When the church fills the needs which they recognize, and shows that it does so because of the Master whom it follows and whom it holds up as the Saviour, they will come to listen to its message and to accept the love and the life whose power they see.

4. It will aid mightily the missionary spirit of which it is an outgrowth. Its practical efficiency, and the desperate needs which its very success makes evident, appeal to hearts before unmoved. It will open purses which have

been tightly clasped. It will follow the call for money with a call for men and women to equip its multitudinous branches of effort. Many who would rejoice in giving their lives to direct Christian labor but who feel themselves unfitted for the work of the ministry, will find the door wide open to the precious privilege of dedicating their talents, whatever they may be, to this new calling.

5. But perhaps the most powerful effect of all will be the exaltation of the preaching of the gospel pure and simple, and the adoption by the church of direct and regular evangelistic efforts. If it can be shown, as these illustrations we have had do show, that the mainspring of success is in the forceful presentation of the simple gospel of Christ, it will send men who minister to churches without the means of large institutional work, to their preaching and their pastoral work with new inspiration and with new ideals of service. It will make the work of the minister more practical. He will need to be more than ever a man of one book, of one simple, all absorbing faith and purpose, and at the same time more than ever a man among men. Already this effect is seen in New England, and the fact that the students of two of our theological seminaries are identified with this kind of work means that the institutional church is to have a powerful influence in shaping the thought and methods of the ministry of the future.

But many who recognize that there is force in these statements, feel that the institutional churches must be few in number because of the large outlay required. It is true that, in the nature of the case, there can be few churches like Berkeley Temple, with its revenue of nearly \$20,000 per year, nor is it certain that many such enterprises are warranted. But duplication of detailed methods is not to be sought, and it is the method which costs. It is possible to adopt the principles, to make a conscientious effort to reach man, to minister to him as far as possible on all sides of his

nature, to keep the doors of the church open all the week, and to provide within that which will attract attendance, without an income beyond the power of many of our churches. In the city of Worcester, Mass., for example, near its western boundary, at a considerable distance from its business centre, is Pilgrim Congregational Church, only seven years old, not wealthy, having its building encumbered with a very large debt, having a membership (Jan. 1, 1891), of less than three hundred and yet having and working an institutional equipment. Beside its pastor it has a gymnasium instructor, and a carpenter, who serve the church a part of their time. It has a wooden ell 40 x 80 feet, containing a gymnasium, dressing-rooms, lockers, bathroom, carpenter shop, printing-office, reading-room, hall for entertainments, games, girls' industrial class, boys' industrial class, and all the work is carried on at a very slight outlay. The gymnasium, cadets, and printing-office are self-supporting, and all the other special efforts cost only two hundred dollars per year. Such an example shows that there is something in this movement for a large share of our churches. Some of them have been doing practically this kind of work in many lines. The step for such a church from its present position to that of an institutional church is largely one of equipment. No radical or revolutionary process would be involved. Nor is this for the city church alone—there are in the movement distinct suggestions to many country churches. Some are already moving in this direction. One, for example, has a library, the gift of the son of one of the early pastors, now containing five thousand volumes, and is able to assist the people to the best reading. Another has a printing press and an outing field. In fact it may be said that the institutional church is only the crystallization and large outworking of the force of a living gospel expressed in a true spirit of brotherhood,—without which, in some measure, any church is dead even while it liveth.

It is the fashion with some sociologists under the stress of the present need to defame the church. Such work is ill-advised. The hope of the world is in and through the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever her mistakes and deficiencies have been, her ministry and her fellowship have been worth more to mankind than all other agencies combined. God means that in every age she should lead men to his light, bless them with his love, declare to them the unsearchable riches of Christ, and aid them in every way unto the upbuilding of character. This movement in the church of to-day, to seek out a remedy for social distresses, this willingness to fling herself into the conflict with sin and vice, at whatever cost, is only another token such as the ages of the past have seen, that she seeks to discharge the commission which God has laid upon her. She hears the Macedonian cry coming from young men and women on the brink of the precipice which borders the bottomless depths of sin, "Come over and help us." The followers of Christ respond with eagerness, "We go! We go! Thou, O Master, dost lead us whither the voice of need calleth! We believe in thy power to triumph! We trust in thy leadership! We toil on, whatever be the fierceness of the struggle, till that time when the kingdoms of this world are become thy kingdom, and when all, from the least unto the greatest, shall know and love and serve thee!"