

Pittsfield, Mass. December 5, 1909.

Subject, Is your God Dead ?

In your life and in mine, in the life of every individual as well as in society as a whole there is being waged constantly the irrepressible conflict between what has been and what shall be. Or perhaps it would be more true to say that the dynamic of what has been is forever trying to establish what ~~xx~~ shall be. With unspeakable toil we have been working heretofore until now to accomplish, and to establish what is at this moment. But even before that which is has been attained, the voice of that which shall be is crying out to us from the ~~xxx~~ un-explored seas of futurity. This is the very essence of us and of life. The child shall lead us here. From his spontaneous wonder working little life, as naturally as the spring gushes to the surface ~~fx~~ driven from beneath by the unseen powers,

come those questions from the mind of the child. Not contented with being what he is, his mind ever wonders to futurity, dreaming, speculating, imagining on that which shall be, The child longs to be the big boy; the big boy longs to be the youth; the youth longs to be the young man; and the young man longs to become the man. Thus do we build ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ more stately mansions for our souls as the swift seasons roll. It is the law of life, the law of growth, the law of progress, the great fundamental impulse of all that has been, of all that is, and of all that shall be.

Behind it all is the implicit faith that childhood shall attain to boy-hood, and boy-hood, and boy-hood to man-hood. That which shall be already is in the untainted mind of the healthy robust child. You ask if the child is religious and the upwelling impulse to life that throbs in every parti-

cle of his being burns your question to cinders ere it leaves your lips. Does he not have faith that which he dreams of shall be ? Is not the hero that he worships the drawing that he is making of things as he sees them for the God of things as they are ? Each day that he lives , is he not making his God that shall be his, and that shall lead him through the slippery paths of youth that bring him up to man ?

But day by day the child learns, as all must learn, that we do not leap from childhood to manhood, but that we build the ladder by which we climb . The mere dreaming is not the attainment, the prayer that flows from our being , expressing the vision of things that shall be, is not ~~attained~~ answered by some charitable God, but is attained by us through toil and effort. The faith of the child and our faith consists in this that as we keep our minds intent on that which shall be, and walk ~~firmly~~ fearlessly in the unexplored seas of

futurity, the ideal that we have drawn for the God of things as they are shall lead us unto truth, and life.

These are the great principles and the great lessons of life. I want to take them up to apply them to our-selves and the conditions that we live in. For after all is said and done we are but children, grown large, and society is but the multiplication of us. With these simple principles in mind, and these plain facts before us I want to ask this question, Is our God dead? Are we living for the thing that shall be <sup>or</sup> ~~are~~ we, grown to the age when we should be doing the real things of life, still playing and fondling over the toys of childhood, caressing the things that have been, but from whose lifeless forms all vitality has passed? That is the question, which is being asked of us and of our age, as it has been asked of all men and all ages, each day that the sun rises to shed its warming light upon a growing ~~unhappy~~ world.

Is your God dead ? you ask. But what is your God ? Have you ever seen him ? ~~xxxxxxx~~ Does he yet live ? The whole great panoramic field of history is covered with the decaying remains of dead Gods. Age after age man has made his gods, has gone forth to the the world, proclaiming his nature and his character, and declaring his his rule and dominion shall hold over all men and through all ages. But the onswEEPing rush of time has ruthlessly killed them, and amid tears of bitter disappointment their followers have laid them, as the child sometimes reluctantly lays aside his toys. The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaas , and the God Of Jacob is dead. Are you sure that your God also is not dead ? Are you sure that you are not wasting your time pouring the precious ointment of human life over the lifeless body of a dead God ?

Listen . What is your God ? Is he that pile of sand, made in the image of man, that you in childlike joy have moulded

is that your God ?6-  
upon the shore of time ? But what is there lasting in that ?  
Will not the incoming tide of human life wash it away, and  
there will remain of it only the vague picture in your mind  
of what you once conceived your God to be. Or is your God the  
picture that someone has told you that some one made ages ago?  
But is he not also dead ? Is your God the the God that the  
Church has told you about ? Ask the church where it got its  
God, and it will lead you to some remote shore of the past,  
and point to the spot where at some time , so the legend says,  
God spoke unto man. But ages and ages ago the flood tide of  
human life had swept away the last vantage of anything that is  
living, and that God, the god of the church, the god of tradit-  
ion, is unto man to-day as the toy of childhood is to the full  
grown man, working in the heat and stress of human life. Is it  
not that the trouble with churches to-day? They have no God.

Have we a God.?

What is your God ? Your God is the image of our own inner life and convictions~~xxxx~~ cast upon the blackness of an ~~xxxx~~ unexplored futurity. Man have made , men are making, and men will ~~always~~ make gods becuase it is of their very nature to do so. Like the child they have faith that the thing which they dream, shall become, and that all the universe will work together with them for its attainment. They have faith that if by chance they have dreamed a foolish dream, or uttered a foolish prayer, that the same unfolding life will show them the true dream and the true prayer. The child in his simplicity believes that the world in which eh lives is a world in which he <sup>may</sup> ~~will~~ grow to manhood . So also does the man believe that ~~the~~ the universe in which he lives , and in which the great hopes and spirations of his life have come to being, is a universe in which those hopes may be realized, and ~~xxxx~~ shall have

a place of honor. Not that he himself has created them alone, but that all the great flux of life has conspired together with him to bring them into being in his personality, and that all the great flux of life will conspire to make them, through labor and toil, the living reality. All through the ages the word God has been used to express his faith in the universal life as a life that works together with <sup>him</sup>for the attainment of things that shall be. I have a great vision of things that shall be, of the human life that shall be attained. I look about me, and view with despair the wide contrast between what is and what I have dared to hope shall be. Behold, I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, and I ask, Whence Cometh My help? Then it dawns upon my mind, that the very forces that are at work there, have been at work in me. It is the voice of deep calling unto deep. My hope, my aspiration, my vision is in part



the product of that which has been, and gives a faint hint of that which shall be. Lo, I have made my God, ~~xx~~ The image that I have made forces that are working with me, that is my God, ~~xxxxxxx~~ That becomes to me the symbol of my faith ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ in this ideal achieving capacity of the Universe; in which I live and move and have my being. Even as the child, I have drawn the things as I see them for the God of things as they are.

What is your God? Your god is your image of your true and secret aspiration for the things that shall be, for the human life that shall be attained. You have made him to help you do the work, whose very stupendousness staggers you/, and yet the work in which you believe, as the child believes in manhood.

Now for the question, Is your God dead? The question is answered in your own inner life, whose secrets no one can penetrate. What are your purposes? Aims dominate your conduct?

What considerations control your choices in the momentous issues of life, when you are called upon to cast the weight of your personality into the scales.? Do you still fondly cherish the toys of childhood, while the handles of the working tools of mature life, wait for the warmth of your hand ? Are you ~~st~~ still coddling those dreams of years ago, without ever making an effort to realize them, without knowing that all creation is at your command to assist you ? Do you stil ponder over the gods that others have made, wondering whether they are true or not ? Then your God is dead . You cannot worship or serve the God that another has made. He must be your own, bone of your bone, fiber of your nature, bearing the images of your own secret purposes, not the picture of yourself, but the image of yourself, stamped upon the universe, your own hopes and aspirations translated into the great universal li fe.

Is there no great end and aim into whose realization you are casting yourself, and whose welfare depends, you feel sure, upon what you may do for it.? Take the thing that interests us together in this church? Does this church stand for any great working force, any great aim that must be attained, upon the success ~~and~~ <sup>or</sup> failure of ~~which~~ the good of human life depends? If it does not, if it is merely a conventional thing, which you support simply because it is the thing to do it, simply because ~~many~~ <sup>many</sup> people do interest themselves in some church, ~~in~~ then we have no God, Our God is dead, and we are ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ coddling toys ~~xxxx~~ while the working tools of mature life await the grip of our hand. But on the other hand, if you have seen the vision of human life, which shall have been freed ~~in~~ from the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ stiffling ~~and~~ load of tradition, and meaningless formality, that chocks the very soul aspiration

for true simple natural life, if you have seen the vision of a humanity that dares to throw off the bondage of authority, and dares to submit itslef to the life under freedom , if you have seen the vision of a humanity that shall believe in itself, and in the natural beauty and sanctity of human life in all its relations; if , having seen this ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ we come ~~ka~~ together to realize that purpose, and to keep clear before us the vision that we have seen, and to keep constantly sharpened the working tools that we shall handle in doing our work for that end ; If having seen that vision, having cought a glimpse, of what life, may be, ought to be, and through us shall become and we come here to understand the high values of human life,-- then we have made our own God, and our God is a living vital thing, working for us and with us in the realization of the great aims that are before us. The question of Atheism or ~~the~~ Theism, is not a question of ~~fx~~ philosophy, but of fact.

We may make gods from now until the end of time, but we do not change the ultimate reality. The atheist, the man who has no God is not he who says that the gods are dead, but he who pours the precious ointment of human life upon the remains of some dead God in whom we find the embodiment of men of long ago. The true theist is the person who has an ideal, who is working for the things that shall be, and has faith that the ~~universe~~ universe is with him. He has made his own God, has drawn the thing as he sees it for the God of things as they are. I care not by what name he may call his ~~god~~ ideal and his hope, but in that he has faith in its reality, and gives ~~xxx~~ himself to its attainment, he has made, and has a living God. Some of you have seen this week the great play, -The Servant in the House. The real Atheist in the play was the Bishop, and the ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ and the man of faith was the drainman, who touched by the power of an ideal, was finding

his work in the world, and lifting men up. The childlike ~~man~~ daughter was true to human life when she saw in her father the real and abiding qualities of humanity, and the realization of her ideal of a man, brave, beautiful and good. Is your god Dead? Yes, if you are facing the past, and clinging like a parasite to the empty shells in which there was once life. Is your God dead? Yes, if you fear to face the future and stake your all upon the unrealized vision of a ~~new~~ world that shall be, and a human life that is vital and pulsating. Is your God dead? Yes if you are still lacking the childlike faith, that the boy may become the man, or that out of the imperfections of life to day a human life noble, brave and true, may arise.

Our God is not dead. We have faith in the substantial integrity of human life, and we have faith in the substantial

integrity and trustworthiness of the world in which we live. Every where comes the stiffling groans of men and women who are being smothered beneath the burden of poverty, ignorance oppression, and above all else beneath the poisonous mass of dead Gods, thrust upon them by a godless and god ridden ecclesiasticism. As Robert in the servant in the house says, " I mean as I have found my place " I see what must be done, and I know that it can be be done, and I know that I can do it. Do you see that ? Do you see that the world needs to know itslef, needs to have faith in itself, needs to appreciate the the true values of human life, needs the work that you can do. Do you come here to this church because you see that, and because you want to do your part and more, while you hear high in the dome the hammerings of the comrides as have climbed aloft. Do you not see in all thâs the great work of the ages

sometimes going forward in deep darkness, sometimes beneath the burden of unutterable anguish, sometimes to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. When we find our place and see the outline of the world that shall be, and the vision of that which is not, becomes to us as the real world in which we live, then our God lives, and life is real and life is true.