

Why have ye done this thing? Pharaoh [sic] to midwives

The motives that inspire or impell [sic] people to do things are of course many but they may be grouped under a comparatively few headings. The necessity of earning or securing a living, of food, clothing, shelter, heat, light etc. accounts for the reason why we do most of whatever we do.

The desire for pleasure – for the abundant life, accounts for + furnishes the motive for travel, books, games, sports, cars, yachts, adornment and all manner of luxury.

Love furnished the motive of a great deal of human effort, a great deal of sacrifice + labor. So does its opposite hate. This latter motive is the most expensive motive we have. Probably it is the cause of all our trouble. It is devastating in families, communities, + among the nations of the world.

The desire for riches determines the whole manner of life of many people. Some are very selfish – can hardly bring themselves to do anything for others. We are dominated by motives. Some of which are called good because they make for peace, mutual benefits – a cooperative society – the general welfare – and some motives we call bad because men acting upon them become anti-social. Whatever makes for the abundant life of all is good – but whatever makes for sorrow + disruption, of society – the disintegration of character is bad.

So to day I would like to have you consider with me what the religious motive has inspired men to do. The manner of life it impells [sic] men to live. Its first great manifestation seems to have been to build, alters, [sic] then temples, cathedrals, for the love, honor + fear + glory of their gods men have made huge sacrifices, Because religion impelled them to do so. The Egyptian Pyramids, Maya Temples the huge + glorious temples of India. The cathedrals of Europe. These have been very costly in terms of human labor – and of course a very large part of it slave labor.

Not that I approve of the manner of this construction but the fact is that had it not been for their religious edifices we would to day have almost no record of several past races

All that remains of a wonderful Maya civilization is their temples. At Chichen Itza in Guatamalia [sic] The Pyramids of Egypt. Ankor [sic] Wat in Siam. all speak of a high degree of civilization that somehow passed. We have respect for their achievements.

The only real achievements of the middle ages of European Civilization was its cathedrals. Like St. Peters in Rome, St. Marks in Venice Notre Dame in Paris, Milan, and others in almost any capitol city. I look at the pictures and shudder to think of the cost yet they were nothing compared with the wars they waged at the same time. St. Johns Cathedral of N.Y. City costing probably 15 or 20 possibly 30 millions of money. Seems rather inconsistent to see beggars resting on the steps of a church dedicated to the service of Christ – a man who likewise had not a place to lay his head. Seems like a misuse of money. Yet we cheerfully pay twice or 3 times as much for a battle ship – whose life is about 20 years. While St. Johns presumably will last many centuries. and be a joy, a beauty and a richness in the lives of millions all down those centuries. I guess we might not to complain of the cost. It is one of the great achievements of our generation.

Our religion has inspired our greatest art. The greater paintings seem to have a religious motive. DaVinci's "Last Supper" and Michael Angelos life work in the cistine [sic] chapel at St. Peters. The Pictures of the Madonna + Jesus – are the most famous and the oftenest reproduced. Religious music the greatest music Religious Litterature [sic] is our very best – and human character is exalted to its very height by religion. The founders of religions have been the greatest heroes of any race.

But even all of the great temples, mosques, cathedrals, all the Art – Music + Litt inspired by religion is not by any means its greatest achievement in the civilizing of humanity. The process of changing and refining human nature, of changing a man from Cromagnon or Neanderthal savagery into something like the or toward the likeness of the Christ – is so slow that many people say "Human nature does not change, nor can it be changed. Yet it has been changed – very gradually – human conscience has be slowly developed. These are things we do not do because it is wrong i.e. anti social – against the common interest.

Very early in human history the medicine man, the priests set up taboos – things which were not to be done, and which if done carried heavy penalties. The first laws were all religious there was no civil law in the ancient of days. We may laugh at many of their commandments – but in their day they were no doubt important. Anyway the process of civilizing man began. It is a process that goes on forever and the religious motive is almost the only one. It has made man grow more gentle, increased his brotherliness, awakened sympathy + pity, kindled love, subdued mans barbarism – very slowly but gradually + surely all the time. After long experience man finds out that the ideals of religion are more practical than the customs of savagery, and we move up a notch. This is, after all, the greatest achievement of religion. I'll agree that religionists having reached a certain level are then conservative, stand patters, loath to go on to new + higher levels and have tried to arrest progress – and been the opposition to progress many times. But nevertheless even in its reactionary state it still helps + inspires the more backward peoples that come under its influence.

Religion is still awakening the conscience of man. For 3000 yrs. the more progressive part of the world has been monotheists – conceived one creator of us all – but we have been very slow to apply the logic of that tenet of faith to our daily lives. That means of course the Bro. of man. The term was not even used up to comparatively recently but as long ago as Isaiah the prophet realized that the gentile nations were under the same rule as the Jews, that God had purposes with them – that though they knew him not yet the creator used them, guided + guided them to ends of which the persians for e.g. were unaware.

So we inquire how is religion inspiring man to day? 1st we are showing men the folley [sic] + sin of war. Mans conscience is not keen upon this subject yet. For the most part the world still thinks that a resort to arms + mass murder is the best way of settling disputes, only way. So nearly all nations go in for vast armament programs.

The people who go to church and have religious interests are always the leaders in social reforms. Their consciences and moral perspectives are the first to be kindled + awakened. Thus we find these out ahead of the majorities of the race always persecuted, divided – often hated, some times jailed. As illustrated by Geo Fox – whose life we will study in S.S.

The great temperance movement led by M.I. Bapt. and even orthodox not most orthodox, churches.

The religious motive of to day is – "Life is more precious than anything else. The caliber of the people are the true riches of the country or world. Profits are good. Business is good to be desired but not at the price of child labor, drunkenness, imperiled homes squalor of the working class – dehumanizing of the masses. It is more practical – more progressive, + happiest for any nation to help the poor the weak the ignorant + the foolish, than to exploit them.

So religion as we know it encourages aspiration. It teaches men to live together in mutual helpfulness + in peace. To bear one anothers burden + fulfill the law of Christ.

We cannot expect people to go the whole way of this program in a single bound. We only gradually + slowly make such progress. But when it is made, if it ever is, It will be the very greatest achievement of mankind. Greater than all buildings all temples, all art, all music, all litt. It will be the religious motive that inspires us. Religion is really inspiration to achievement.

This is not the whole story, of course. Religion may degenerate into something entirely different – until it becomes opium to the people. It did that in Russia – with what result! Will religion standing in + obstructing the path of human progress – was wiped out – but a truly religious motive of brotherhood was substituted for it. There will be an organized religion in Russia sooner or later. A people cannot endure without it. Life will become impractical – purposeless, not inspired. Sacrifice is the law of life.