

Let us now look at the evidence of the catalytic power of the gospel.

*In the first place, such a power is derived from the adaptedness of the gospel to human wants.*

How well adapted it is to promote the temporal welfare and happiness of man, may be seen by comparing the condition of society in Christian lands with that of heathen and Mohammedan countries. So striking is the contrast, that truly and literally we may say of Christianity, it has *the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*. But it is mainly of man's spiritual wants that I speak at this time. For though felt more or less by all, and by many with great intensity, they are met and satisfied nowhere save in the gospel. Yet how purblind men are to this panacea! They search for remedies every where else. They run the whole round of sensual gratification in the vain expectation of relief; but they find only a bitter aggravation of their sufferings. They toil for wealth, for honor, for power, and perhaps are eminently successful. But the void in their hearts is only made larger and more painful. They resort to social enjoyments, or to learning, or to splendid worldly enterprises; but all in vain; the terrible craving of their nature continues, and, like the cast-out unclean spirit, they *go through dry places, seeking rest, yet finding none*. They resort finally to deeds of charity, to self-mortifications, and to the rites of a religion of forms; and here they fancy they must find peace. But if they do, it is only a false and a transient peace—the peace of self-delusion, not the peace of God. And when some trying exigency of life overtakes them, the visor drops from their eyes, and the cheated soul within cries out in anguish for something to lean upon in the hour of suffering and of death.