

# **MUSIC-HALL SERMONS**

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Music-Hall Sermons by William H. H. Murray

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**WILLIAM H. H. MURRAY**

**MUSIC-HALL  
SERMONS**



**E. B. Walworth.**  
**MUSIC-HALL SERMONS.**

BY

**WILLIAM H. H. MURRAY,**

PASTOR OF PARK STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

*SECOND SERIES.*



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## SERMON I.

MODERN SCEPTICISM; HOW IT SHOULD BE MET.

"And he marvelled because of their unbelief." — MARK vi. 6.

I WISH to speak to you this evening touching the relation of Christianity to unbelief; not the unbelief of the Jews, but the unbelief of Americans, — the unbelief of New England. Men say that scepticism is on the increase. I doubt it myself. I think that error has seen its best estate in our country, — that it has reached, especially here in New England, its highest flood-mark. Its current henceforth will shrink, not swell; it is already on the ebb. The causes of this decline are many and evident. I cannot now enumerate them. I will only say, in brief, that error at the start in this State was fortunate in two things: first, its leadership, — it could show a wonderful array of great names in its support; and, second, it was fortunate in the peculiar circumstances and conditions of the public mind. Neither of these advantages belong to it to-day. It is weak in great names. It is weaker yet in the conditions of the age, which is

positive, and cannot applaud a negative philosophy, religion, or political theory. The Christian religion is therefore, as I look at it, about to reap its heaviest harvest and win its grandest victory. Everything so far is hopeful ; but everything is in a state of transition, nothing is assured. Everything may be lost. Inactivity will lose it ; mismanagement of the moral forces at our disposal will lose it. We need to make every possible effort to impress upon the country at large and people individually the value and blessedness of religion. The masses must be made acquainted with a saving faith, must be confirmed in their adherence to firm, conservative habits and principles, or all is lost. Unbelief will destroy us if it be allowed to spread and become the fashion of the land.

One of the first and most pressing things to do is to make everybody see and feel the strength of Christianity and the radical weakness of scepticism. I propose, in the few moments I have to devote to discussion, to contrast the two, and assist you to a correct estimate of those spiritual forces given of God in his mercy to man, but which become operative only so far as they are received into willing hearts.

One thing we must not forget, namely, that Christianity is a fact. Its philosophy is thought out ; its ethics are promulgated ; its moralities are reduced to practice ; its predictions are fulfilled.

Any objection urged against it is to be regarded as an objection urged against an established system. This is the vantage-ground that the Christian religion holds over scepticism. If one could live in a vacuum he might doubt that there was any such thing as wind, and persuade his scepticism off upon others ; but he would find it exceedingly difficult to do this when he stood with a current blowing against his cheek and among those who lived in the open air. Well, Christianity, like the wind, is its own proof ; it bears testimony of itself, and yet its testimony is true. It is seen in its effects. Its results are patent to all, and no objection can stand which ignores the powerful existence of what it condemns. The presence of apples in the markets proves that there must be orchards.

Indeed, religion has become so intimately interwoven with the people's life, so embodied in our institutions, it exists so little in its abstract forms and so fully in its concrete, that in one sense no objection can be brought against it. To bring an objection against Christianity you must object to the civilization it has nourished, to the political structure it has raised up, and to the character of the people whom it has educated and inspired. You cannot separate the tree from the fruit, the stream from the fountain, the fragrance from the flower. They stand or fall together. The blow aimed at the one hits both ; their censure and praise