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CONCIONES AD CLERUM

1879-1880.

BY

A. N. LITTLEJOHN, D.D.

BISHOP OF LONG ISLAND.

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TO
THE RT. REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D., LL.D.,
BISHOP OF CONNECTICUT,
FROM WHOM, DURING A PERIOD OF MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS,
I HAVE RECEIVED MANY KINDNESSES THAT I CAN
NEVER HOPE TO REPAY,
AND BY WHOM I HAVE BEEN HONORED WITH A FRIENDSHIP
WHICH, I PRAY, MAY BE CONTINUED
TO THE END,

This Volume is Affectionately Inscribed,

BY THE AUTHOR.





PREFACE.

ON four occasions during Lent, 1879 and 1880, I met the clergy of my Diocese for conference on the duties and the labors of the Ministry. What I said to them is contained in the following pages. I have added nothing except a few notes and Appendices. Knowing how much has been written on the same subjects, and the difficulty of making any fresh contribution to their discussion which would be of much value, or would be likely to command attention, I should not have published these Addresses but for the request of the Clergy who heard them.

A. N. L.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY, 1880.



I.

CLERGY AND PEOPLE.

II.

THE CURE OF SOULS.

III.

THE GRACE OF ORDINATION;
HOW TO QUICKEN AND DEVELOP IT.



I.

CLERGY AND PEOPLE.

WE are here for no general or uncertain purpose. We have met at the beginning of this solemn season of the Church's year, which has always been used to quicken and refresh the spiritual life of clergy and people, for three definite ends : (1) by united prayers and supplications to obtain a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost for ourselves and for those committed to our charge ; (2) by a devout partaking of the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood to draw nearer to Him from whom our commission to minister in holy things is derived, to enter more earnestly into His example, His character, His work, as the Pattern Priest, Prophet, and Ruler of a redeemed humanity, and so to stir up the gift that is in us by the laying on of hands ; (3) as the ordained officers of the kingdom of Christ to take counsel together on certain questions of duty and work, which, though never absent from our

thoughts, yet, at this time, have a special claim upon our consideration. What I may be able to say may be of comparatively little moment. My aim will be accomplished if, as the result of this assembling together, you shall be more deeply impressed with a sense of the fellowship of the Christian Ministry, and of the duty and power of that fellowship to bring you into closer sympathy, to enable you to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ—to give to the younger and less experienced some light and courage and strength drawn from acknowledged veterans in the service.

The first subject to be handled is ourselves ; the second, our flocks ; the third, our office, or at least one phase or function of it.

Ourselves, ministers of Christ, stewards of the Divine mysteries, priests of the Most High God, leaders and teachers of the faithful, heralds of salvation to the unbelieving and impenitent, by whom, as in Christ's stead, God beseeches all men to turn from their sins and be saved : as such, what are our special duties and exercises at this time ? When the Church solemnly calls upon her clergy and her

people to examine and try their ways, to sanctify a fast, to thrust the world aside, and to enter upon a severer discipline, it is plain that, whatever the work, the leaders must go before the led, the shepherds must move in advance of the sheep, the commissioned officers must precede the rank and file of the militant host. If the people are to be lifted to a higher plane of duty and worship, their priests must stand where they can beckon them up to it. Therefore inquiry, scrutiny, judgments, reform, revival must begin with them.

There is no time and, in your hearing, no need to describe the ideal of the ministry as we find it in the New Testament or in the lives of those who have embodied it. We know that our ministry should be a growth—if not in the gifts and faculties which compose it, at least in the power to use them. What is human and earthly in it should be all the while merging more and more into the divine and heavenly. Its dominant motive should be constantly changing from the less to the more perfect. Beyond all else intrusted to us, it enfolds the powers of the world to come, and witnesses to the dispensation of the Spirit. As such, to be true

to its own law, it should find in each year the evidence of higher purity of tone and increased fruitfulness in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, we are all ready to exclaim, should be the case. But, alas! experience tells a different story. What a struggle to maintain even a respectable average of gifts, motives, labors! How many fall below that average! How few rise above it! How many decline from the fervor of devotion and concentration of purpose with which they began their ministry! How few, after ten or twenty years of labor, can honestly claim to have advanced in these qualities! We may say, this is not to be wondered at; and it is not. I may not dwell upon the causes. It is enough to name them; for the sufficient proof of their power is in our own consciousness. There is the deadening effect of routine. There is the hardening influence of constant familiarity with holy things, either as objects of mental contemplation or as themes of public speech. There is the subtle temptation to merge a Divine vocation into a respectable profession, which owes us a living. There is the dull, steady attrition of the world, with its

coarser aspirations, its lower motives, its selfish instincts. There is the deterioration of spiritual power that comes of obscurity, discouragement, apparent failure, lack of appreciation among the flock, poverty, and change, and the gradual paralysis of faith in the triumph of good over evil, truth over falsehood. It is not in human nature to be habitually hopeful, habitually fervid, and habitually energetic, when it is found that these qualities do not produce the results we anticipated. Now, these are the facts ; this is the common experience. And yet woe to that man of God set in official position who succumbs to them, who consciously allows this deterioration of a Divine gift and commission to go on. It must be resisted at all hazards ; and to resist it successfully, a strong counter effort must be put forth ; and it is part of the value of Lent that it sets us at work in this direction, and provides special helps and stimulants for doing it. This is the time for self-scrutiny and introspection, for re-examining the interior drift of our lives, for turning up to the eye of the memory and conscience not only the original covenant obligations put on with our Christianity in Holy Baptism, but also

the special, superadded vows of our priestly vocation.

We once declared, at a very solemn moment, that we believed ourselves inwardly called by the Holy Ghost to this office and ministry in the Church of God. Has the evidence of that call strengthened or weakened with the lapse of years? Have we regretted or rejoiced over the place and work which that call assigned us? Was there a reality in the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," or have we doubted whether anything at all was received by us at that moment? We vowed to be diligent in prayer and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and for this end to lay aside the study of the world and the flesh. Have we done so? I need not go over the rest. I simply indicate the line of inquiry. This is the time to compare what we have been and have done with what we promised to be and to do. As we do so, "Oh for one sight of the Cross, the pierced hand, the wounded side! Oh for one keen throb of remembrance! How shall I look on Him whom I have betrayed? How shall I, on whom His hand was laid, to whom His powers were granted," face the peril of having preached

unto others, and in the end of being a castaway myself.

St. Paul was vigilant and bold in warning those whom he set over the Churches under his care to beware lest their ministry should be blamed. Without repeating his language, I may say that his warning is always timely, and especially now. To what extent, if at all, the ministry is declining in its inherent as well as traditional influence, it is needless to inquire in this connection ; but that it is blamed, among other things, for acquiescing in a standard of professional demeanor and service below that set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and observed by the best and wisest in this Divine vocation in every age, for allowing its rule of life, and the minor morals growing out of it, to be adulterated and enfeebled by an undue conformity to the self-indulgent ways of a social life, called Christian by courtesy—that it is blamed for this there can be no doubt ; and to the full extent that the blame is just, there is a loss of spiritual power in every sermon that is preached, in every office that is administered, in every case of direct dealing with the individual soul.

Whatever may be said of the damage wrought

among us by the false liberalism or avowed scepticism of the day, or by the unfortunate divisions of Christendom, with all their sect rivalries and contentions, it is my belief that the weakest points in our line, offensive and defensive, are precisely those which have been created by the gradual intrusion of tastes, methods, indulgences, practices, which, in a hundred ways, are the known and accepted badges of baptized worldliness. I need not stop for examples and illustrations in our general Church life. I am speaking now of and to the clergy—the chosen deputies of Christ—the commissioned shepherds of the flock. And, to leave no doubt as to what I mean, I will take a single case in point. It is sometimes laid down as a sort of axiom, which no one is likely to dispute, that nothing can be wrong in a clergyman which is not just as wrong in a layman. That priest has already become sadly demoralized who can find comfort in such a view, or who can accept it as a convenient apology for doing doubtful things, or being found in doubtful places or in doubtful company. That man's eyes are already set, not on things above, but on things beneath. In his wish to lower for himself the minis-

terial standard, he has learned to reason backward. It is said, such and such amusements—theatre-going and opera-going, for instance—moderately enjoyed, and with due discrimination, are clearly not wrong in a layman if he is, in other respects, a good man. Why, then, should they be wrong in a clergyman? Now, the true answer is to be found not in a nice balancing of opposing expediencies, nor in supposed consequences to others, one way or the other. The answer is above and beyond all casuistry. If it be the true answer, it will not be reasoned out. It will come leaping like a spontaneous impulse from hearts that have vowed to take up the cross, and, forsaking all, to follow Christ. It is implied in every line of the Ordinal, that there is no complete service for Christ that does not begin, continue, and end in self-sacrifice. The priest who means to be an example to the flock, and whose soul is aflame with the holy fire that burned in the Master's soul, is never casting about to find the last possible barrier that separates him from unlawful or worldly indulgence, never asking what he may do without disgracing his vocation or creating scandal, never discussing

the precise amount of conformity to the world which he may venture upon without loss of reputation or influence. Oh, no! The one question with him is, how near he can get to the mind that was in Christ Jesus. The roads lead in opposite directions, and to travel the one is to give up and move farther and farther away from the other.*

* "It generally happens that the majority of those who are governed regard the manners of their rulers as a sort of model image, and make themselves like them. How, then, can he appease their passions who is swollen with anger himself? Who among the multitude would straightway desire to be moderate if he saw his ruler angry? For it is utterly impossible for the failings of priests to be hidden; but the very least become immediately manifest.

"An athlete, so long as he remains at home and contends with nobody, may conceal it, even though he is very weak; but when he strips for the conflict he is easily found out. And some men, who live a private and inactive life, have their seclusion as a veil over their faults; but when they come into the arena they are forced to strip off solitude as a garment, and to show their naked souls to all men by means of their outward movements. As, therefore, their right deeds have profited many by provoking them to equal zeal, so have their shortcomings made men more indifferent to the practice of virtue, and rendered them sluggish in their endeavors after what is excellent. The faults of ordinary men, which are as though committed in the dark, ruin only those who perpetrate them;

But there is another consideration involved. The clergyman is the layman *plus* all that is given and demanded in the loftiest and holiest calling possible to man—the priesthood of Christ ; just as the magistrate is the citizen *plus* all that makes the magistrate, or the military commander the common soldier *plus* the responsibilities of his position. The minister cannot, at will, put on his office and put it off according to his surroundings. His character, like his office, is indelible and continuous,

but the vices of a man who is conspicuous inflict a common injury upon all. And apart from these things, the faults of the obscure, even if they come into notice, are punished with no remarkable punishment ; but those who are seated on the highest pinnacle of honor are, in the first place, manifest unto all men, and in the next place, if they fail in the smallest matters, that which is small seems great to others ; for all men estimate an offence, not by the measure of the action, but by the dignity of him who sins.

“ So long as the life of the priest is well ordered in every way, it is invulnerable ; but if he overlooks ever so little, as easily happens, since he is but a man, he derives no advantage from the rest of his good deeds, for that little fault overshadows all besides. All men will judge the priest, not as one arrayed in flesh and inheriting human nature, but as an angel, and one delivered from remaining infirmity.” *

* Chrysostom on “ The Priesthood,” p. 88-89.

and that character, that office, is essentially spiritual ; and because it is spiritual it wields the powers of the world to come, or rather the powers of the kingdom which is not of this world. It acts for Christ, it acts with Christ, it acts under Christ. He, by the Spirit, gives to its every function whatever virtue it has ; wherever it is, it is representative of that which is above itself and which speaks through itself. And so office, character, conduct, habit, influence, are in every priest but integral parts of his priesthood, constituting an organic whole that is one and inseparable. On both grounds there are many things which a layman may do or leave undone, but which a clergyman may not do, or leave undone. The life of the former is conditioned by his secular occupation as well as by his Christian vocation ; the life of the latter by an office which dominates all else, and must be judged by a standard peculiar to itself. It must be in the world, and of the world, yet above the world.

No, to assume as our rule of life the prevailing customs and standards about us, or to be content with the verdict of public opinion on the *morale* of our lives, or our work, is a degradation of the ideal

of our holy office. If it be true that we have the *special* grace of God, the *special* presence of Christ, the *special* commission to represent the kingdom which is not of this world, it is also true that the rightful measure of our self-devotion and non-conformity to the world can be determined only by a rule of priestly conduct which will appear, to the average of mankind, as fit only for ascetics and abstinents. It is impossible to come to any other conclusion, whether we consult the language habitually used in Holy Scripture on the subject, or the character and requirements of the work to which we have been set apart. Self-indulgent and easy livers the clergy cannot be, unless they mean to cut themselves off from one of the highest sources of their influence. How shall they lift up others, if themselves be not first lifted up? They must live as pilgrims and strangers here, if they would teach others to live so. What matters it that society—people criticise and sneer? What matters it that such a course will be unpopular? It is only what we have to look for that the world should dislike most those who protest most against its spirit. The salt has already gone out of a ministry that has,

in its very tone and attitude, no power of rebuke, no voice of chiding and remonstrance.

Again, let me say a word or two in regard to our *self-sacrifice* in labors for Christ and for souls whom He redeemed, as compared with the self-sacrifice shown by men devoted to secular pursuits. The comparison is not a pleasant one to make, and, if pushed too far, it is even painful in what it reveals. In every profession, in every calling, in every trade it is a common thing to find men of talent, earnestness, and perseverance who allow no personal comfort or convenience to stand in the way of success. So much are they absorbed, so ardently employed in achieving distinction, wealth, and influence, that ease and health are thrown away without a moment's hesitation. They seem not to reckon as of any consequence the pleasures of society, or the quiet and privacy of their homes. Their habits of life, their arrangements of time are forced into rigid conformity with their dominant purpose. What cares the physician who loves his vocation, and is bent on acquiring a professional fame, for festive hours, or hours of repose, when his patient summons him to his bedside? Who thinks of see-

ing the energetic advocate, resolved on winning his way to reputation and influence, at social gatherings, whiling away his time in gossiping talk with people of fashion and pleasure? Who does not expect, as a thing of course, that the soldier will turn his back on every call of the world for the higher ones of professional duty? So with the tradesman and mechanic, who mean to acquire a competence. It is taken for granted that they will be at their work late and early, shortening the hours of sleep, and, if need be, imposing upon themselves habits of stern self-denial. Can the same be said, as a rule, of the vocation specially commissioned of God to save immortal souls and glorify the redeeming Lord? Alas! how comes it that the clergy are expected to take a different line, to be less intense, less absorbed, less worn by the friction of ever-pressing cares and obligations, to have one foot only in the sanctuary and the other in the world? How does it happen that they are regarded as about the only class of men in society who have time to pay and return the ordinary visits of daily courtesy, to be frequent diners out, to bestow a smiling and gracious gravity on festive gatherings, and generally to afford to

their neighbors an attractive example of respectability and domestic comfort? What a contrast! And let us be manly enough to face it. On the one side, men sacrificing everything to wealth, ambition, the praise of their fellows; on the other, the ordained servants of Christ—at least too many of them—yielding, oh, how little! to the demands of a calling which ought to distance all others in denials and hardships and self-abnegation. Complain not of harsh judgments, wonder not at the declining power of the priesthood, or at the turning away of the masses from our altars, or at anything else which reflects upon the earnestness of the ministry or inflicts discredit and damage upon its traditional prestige. The world is testing us by a standard ourselves have raised; and it will test us no otherwise until ourselves break away from that standard. A thousand times better were it that we should be jeered at, ridiculed, denounced as enthusiasts, devotees, ascetics, than that our mode of life, our way of doing the Master's work, our tone of character and conversation, should puzzle the self-pleasing world to discover any radical difference between us and itself.

As to the second topic proposed for consideration, viz., the best means for awakening in the faithful increased interest in the special teachings and services of the Church at this time, that must be handled at another time.

On the third and last topic I must ask your attention for a few moments. Nothing can be more important than the relations of our pastorate to individual souls. It is clearly the mind and theory of the Church that these relations should be very intimate. And what the Church teaches on this subject is only a reflection of what is taught and required in Holy Scripture. Our Lord, as the Shepherd of the sheep redeemed by His blood, knew every one of the flock. He indeed took upon Him our nature as a whole. He died for the race as a whole. His atonement compassed the needs of humanity. And yet He ministered to each soul as though it stood alone. His sympathy and love were personal as to their source, and personal as to their object. He entered into the experiences common to all ; but He also made room in His heart for what is peculiar in every individual experience. If He spoke to men in assemblies and in bulk, He also dealt with men as

individuals—no two of whom were alike in their sin, their doubt, their sorrow, their weakness, their necessity. So with apostles, teachers, pastors, evangelists whom He commissioned. St. Paul, for example, ruled over and disciplined the churches under his care as churches ; he wrote to them as churches. But in his relations to individual believers he declared, “ Who is weak, and I am not weak ? who is offended, and I burn not ? ” So it ought to be with us ; but manifestly so it is not.

The Church invites her members not only to assemble in the sanctuary for joint acts of worship, not only to organize into fellowships and brotherhoods and congregations in order the better to hear God’s Word read and preached, and to partake of the Sacrament and profit generally by all duly appointed means of grace, but she invites them *as individuals* to seek, when occasion may require, godly counsel from their ministers, to open up to them the hurts and wounds and griefs which shadow their faith and hinder their joy. How seldom the invitation is heeded I need not say. The claim for help and guidance which the invitation implies is practically forgotten by the people ; and the obligation to ren-

der them is so seldom pressed upon the clergy that they, in turn, have come to regard it as a very extraordinary emergency which should induce any parishioner to apply to them for this purpose. When the clergy are so approached the inference is, at once, that it must be a very unusual grief, a strangely besetting sin, an overmastering sense of guilt which could tempt the tossed and aching heart to rend its veil of privacy and lay open its secret struggles even to the ordained guide, the commissioned helper and counsellor of souls. What a sad proof of the unfortunate drift in these times ! What a revelation of the unused powers of our pastorate ! Nay, what a testimony to the barrenness and inefficiency of our office on this whole side of its work—this habitual remoteness of the flock from the shepherd, these walls of separation reared by modern negligence and isolation ; the priest charged with the care of souls, and yet the reality dwindled into a figure of speech, a tradition of the past, an empty utterance of the Ordinal ! Why, these are facts which not only arraign, but impeach our administration of the trust committed to us. Disuse of the power to guide has been punished by feeble-

ness and vagueness and incompetency when the exercise of the power is demanded ; while among the people the need of this power has been so long dormant, so long stifled, that they have either become unconscious of its existence, or have ceased to think it of any moment.

Such has been our practice, or, rather, neglect of practice, such our training for the holy office that the average minister to-day rather dreads than courts the exercise of this function of individual guidance. He has come to regard his preaching as quite sufficient for all needs ; and, when through with that, he is through with his duty as an instructor and helper of souls. He may be strong in the region of generalities, but he is weak when confronted by particulars. He is clever at verbal description of moral disease, but quite thrown off his balance in the presence of a special distemper. Knife and cauter, blisters and poultices, and all the thousand resources of a spiritual *materia medica* have figured in his rhetoric, but he has neither nerve nor skill to handle them in a specific case of real trouble. The true and complete physician, whether of soul or body, should be a competent lecturer on the princi-

ples involved in his work ; but he *must* be at home, apt, and well furnished for every crisis, at the bedside of the sick. No theoretical knowledge, no faculty of telling what he knows, can excuse him for ignorant bungling when his finger is on the pulse of his fever-stricken patient.

As for the causes of this state of things, the inquiry needed to compass them were too long and devious to be entered upon here. There is the abhorrence of the Romish confessional, which, in guiding and helping, does so much of both, and in such a way as to undermine personal responsibility. There are the unhealthy publicity and meddling, morbid inquisitiveness of prayer-meeting and class-meeting experiences, which tempt some people to figure in the *role* of glorified angels, and others in that of redeemed and sanctified devils—and all to gratify, sometimes, a craving for excitement, and at others a passion for dramatic incidents, even in religion. And then there is the modern notion, so much idolized in some quarters, that every soul with the Bible in its hands not only can, *when necessary*, work out its own salvation, but, *as a rule*, ought to do it independently of means which God would not have ordained had they been needless—independ-

dently of the Church, which is Christ's own body ; independently of the priesthood, which is Christ's own representative in the discipline and nurture of souls. But, besides, there is the latent, half-paralyzing, widely-prevalent doubt as to whether Christianity is what it seems ; a doubt which poisons the very atmosphere breathed by whole masses within the pale of religion and sends its canker down to the roots of the popular faith.

However we may describe or estimate the causes, the state of things to which I have referred cannot be too much deplored. Whether the fault be in the people, or in the ministry, or in the unhappy temper of these days, or in all, the evil should be taken in hand and a remedy applied. Let not the clergy wait for the people, deeming it time enough to take up the duty in earnest when they shall be pressed to do so ; but rather, after making sure of the mind of Scripture and the Church, let them speak plainly to their flocks, reminding them of their right and their privilege, and of the sore loss they suffer by ignoring them ; and assuring them also of welcome and sympathy and of such careful, loving, conscientious treatment as will bring comfort and strength to their burdened souls.

II.

THE CURE OF SOULS.

OF the three topics discussed in the previous conference and then partially treated by me, I shall now take up only the last, viz., “The proper and efficient exercise of that function of the priestly office which not only entitles, but invites every member of Christ’s body to seek, individually and privately, for such godly counsel and help as he may require because of the hurt or grief of his soul, or because of his peculiar and besetting sins, or because of spiritual dangers and trials of any sort with which he may be too weak and inexperienced to deal.” The subject, as will be noticed, is very broadly stated, and purposely so. The recent attempts to introduce among us the whole penitential system of modern Romanism, of which habitual auricular confession is the prominent feature, have made it difficult to treat the subject at all without arousing suspicion and fear in many minds. As it is here put,

the subject embraces a great deal both in the way of needs and helps, for which even a thorough and inquisitive confessional does not provide. But much as the Romish method of handling individual souls may be dreaded, let it be remembered that no one's dread will seriously hinder its work. If we are to check its advance, if we are to overthrow it in the end, we must do it by putting a better method in its place. The evil that is in it will be conquered only by the good that we plant beside it. The same is true of the opposite method, so common and so much relied upon among some of the Christian denominations. The public recital of private and personal religious experience has developed dangers and abuses to which we are more keenly alive, perhaps, than are their immediate observers. And yet, however repugnant it may be to our taste, and even to our convictions, it must not be forgotten that this style of confession is grounded upon a too literal rendering of the apostolic injunction, "Confess your sins one to another;" just as the Romish is grounded upon a too liberal, or too narrow, interpretation of our Lord's words to His duly commissioned ministry (St. Matthew 16 : 19). Both methods are ex-

aggerations, and hence corruptions, of a divine direction and a divine promise. But as with the abuses of the confessional, so with the abuses of the opposite system, we are to correct them, not by denouncing them, but by setting up something better in their places. Finding so much to condemn in both systems, some have given up the whole matter in a spirit of despair, as though there were no third course to pursue, no possibility of giving to the individual Christian the private help he may need, or of enabling the guide of souls to do his full duty in a relation of so much delicacy and difficulty with safety to all the interests involved, and with benefit to the members of the flock seeking his personal care.

But the inaction, the indifference, the neglect produced by such a view are worse, far worse, than the evils complained of in either of the opposing systems. And yet just this is the view practically to-day of a very large majority of our clergy and people. We reject the confessional. We turn away almost with disgust from the coarse publicity and the often canting garrulity of *experience* meetings. The one is too secret, the other is too open ; the one puts too

much power over the conscience in the hands of the priest, the other leaves no power at all in his hands ; the one we denounce as tyranny, the other we describe as liberty run out into license and anarchy ; in the one the individual surrenders himself to another's keeping, in the other the individual undertakes to be his own keeper.

But merely finding fault with what others do is not the whole duty of those who pretend to maintain a positive faith and to be engaged in aggressive Christian work. It was a profound conviction of the inconsistency and weakness of our position touching this whole subject that induced me to bring it to your attention at this time.

Now, it is my belief that, as in polity, doctrine, and worship, we hold a very definite and positive ground, which none, except those who do it ignorantly or wilfully, can confound with that of popery or that of any or all the modern sects ; so in this matter of the guidance and help of individual souls by the ministers of Christ there is abundant room for a course of action which, while avoiding the evils complained of in both the systems which have been noticed, would assure to the faithful the exercise of

their right to claim from their pastors a more detailed and personal guidance, and would enable the pastors, on their side, to respond to this claim with benefit to themselves and to their flocks. As things are, it may be hard to mark out at once and to mature in all respects this course of action. Both clergy and people need special and perhaps long preparation for it. The tone in both is slack even to feebleness, if it be not loose even to demoralization. The people will be suspicious of any assumption of authority by the clergy ; and yet the clergy can do little in the way of reform in this direction unless the people will see again, as in times gone by, more authority in the priestly office than the temper of these times is willing to concede to it. And then, it may be said that if we are going into cases of conscience with any sort of system ; if we are to invite our people to bring before us privately all their difficulties and trials, covering not only their religion, but their lives as affected by their religion ; if every priest is to be not only a *consolator mœrentium*, but also a *ductor dubitantium*, and a *confessor penitentium*, let us first be prepared for such delicate and serious functions. We need rules to

guide us in the performance of such functions. There has been a shrinkage on this side of our pastorate, and before we enter upon such work we must be trained and fitted to do it. We shall have thrust upon us the tasks and duties of casuists. But where is our casuistry? Neither in the recent education of the clergy, nor in the later literature of the Church, do we find much to inspire a taste for, or to furnish any practical guidance in, such duty. I see the hindrance, and do not underrate it.

But let us remember in this case what is so true in many others, that we shall never know what we want, nor how to meet our want, nor the resources at hand to enable us to meet it, until we seriously and honestly take the work in hand. The very doing of the duty, or the attempt to do it, in spite of our inexperience and imperfect knowledge, will throw a flood of light upon the now hidden ways and means of success. We shall then find that God's Word, when read by an open-eyed, sensitive, and inquisitive conscience, has in it more casuistry (in a good sense) than we have been wont to think. Indeed, we shall be surprised to see how much in detail, how deeply, widely, searchingly, exhaustively

it deals with the *ins* and *outs* of human nature, with the lights and shadows, the fluctuating currents, the mysterious evolutions, the spasms and the stagnations, the heats and chills, the infirmities and inconsistencies, the delusions and illusions, the fancies and conceits, the sincerities and hypocrisies, of the leading types of religious experience under which nineteen twentieths of the Christians of every generation may be grouped. Moses and the prophets were rather incisive casuists when they dealt with the sins of the Israelites. David, in many of his Psalms, evinced a singular aptness and versatility in the same way. Our Lord himself was, as we might expect, the chief and sovereign casuist, for none ever spake as He spake, when He turned upon human nature the unshadowed light of God's law, and opened upon the bewildered sight of humanity the awful compass of its spiritual meaning. In His hands, for the first time, things touching the moral life seemed what they were, and were what they seemed. St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. James, have all left behind them the evidences of an inspired familiarity with the life of God in the human soul, its wants, trials, dangers ; and also with the char-

acteristics of the discipline needed to meet them. And without going back to the pages of what, in a general way, is called Patristic literature, without drawing upon the Schoolmen who dealt with theology in its relations with metaphysics not more acutely or learnedly than with practical ethics, we shall find, if we diligently search after it among the illustrious group of our own Anglican divines, from the sixteenth century down, no unworthy disciples of the Apostles and early Fathers, both in the science of moral theology and in the trained practical power of applying its rules and precepts to the individual conscience. No age of the Church has had abler men in this line of thought than Bishops Taylor and Sanderson, to mention no others among a hundred lesser lights. There may be those upon whom the minutely, morbidly inquisitorial spirit of the modern confessional has thrust tasks which drive them for help to the manuals of Dens and Liguori, *et id omne genus*. But such helps are not needed by us, nor will they be until some great corruption shall have darkened our gaze, or some great convulsion shall have loosened our hold upon the faith and practice, the life and discipline of the ages when Apostles gov-

erned and taught, or even of the later ones when the fathers sat in undisputed œcumenical councils.

Casuistry is related to ethics as an art to a science. The principles and rules of ethics being established, casuistry brings them to bear on practical life. In a general way, it deals with all duties and with all things that hinder the performance of duties—*i.e.*, with states of mind, moods of feeling, weaknesses or perversions of the will, evil habits, vices, sins, infirmities of temper, torpors of conscience. In fact, all moral disturbances of the soul, all disorders and depravities of heart, fall within its range. Though as popularly understood, its chief task is with mixed and doubtful questions of morals, the casuist, like the lawyer and the physician, is engaged in applying general rules to particular cases, running through all the varieties which are forever changing the face of human actions and experience. Here is a law and there is an action, and the question is whether the action falls under the law, or only partly under it, and partly under some other law. Guilt, in every case, is determined by intention, by knowledge, by the degree of responsibility, by surrounding circumstances. All these must be examined and

weighed before an opinion can be pronounced. The same action very often is not equally guilty in all persons and under all conditions. "Out of these cases, *i. e.*, oblique deflections from the universal rule (which is also the grammarian's sense of the word *case*), casuistry arose." It grows necessarily out of the nature of moral rules and out of the ever-changing character of human conduct ; and its uses become more urgent as society grows more complex and all life more diversified. As has been well said, "We may reject the name ; the thing we cannot reject."

For fully three hundred years, numerous and valuable as have been the contributions to moral science by various English divines and moralists, it is noteworthy how little comparatively they have done for casuistry. In their treatises on ethics, they have woven in a good deal of it in the way of special illustration, but with no formal attempt to develop it as a separate branch of research. If we study its history, we find that it has had scarcely any systematic treatment outside of Italian, Spanish, and French writers, with, perhaps, here and there an exception among the Germans. Somehow, the ethi-

cal as subordinated to the ecclesiastical mind of Southern Europe has taken to casuistry as by a sort of instinct. This cannot be traced, among them, to any special subtlety or refinement of the moral sense in handling subjects germane to it, but is due more likely to the exigencies of the confessional, an instrumentality more habitually used and more thoroughly developed among these races than among those of Northern Europe. This fact again, if traced far enough, will be found to be largely due to marked differences of moral temperament between the two sets of people.

Among the works on the subject written by Englishmen, one appeared in 1698.* It is a collection of tracts, essays, and discourses by several well-known authors of the time, and exhibits great learning and ability in the line of investigation which it pursues. But it is confined to cases of conscience arising among Dissenters in regard to communion with the Church of England. Still, there is nowhere to be found more acute reasoning, or more exhaustive and subtle analysis of the functions and obligations of conscience when at work on some of

* London Cases.

the most tangled and difficult problems of religious and moral duty.

Clearly, casuistry fell into disrepute during and immediately after the Reformation, and there it had continued until the recent revival of it in England by the advocates of regular and habitual confession. This revival has been formally signalized by the publication in English of the Abbé Gaume's "Manual for Confessors," edited by Dr. Pusey and prefaced by him with an elaborate defence of the confessional in the Church of England.*

No one familiar with the history of modern casuistry can wonder that it has been under a cloud, or that it has excited a profound antipathy throughout the English-speaking world. It has been cultivated with almost exclusive reference to its professional use in auricular confession, and very lawfully and properly it has shared in the horror and hatred engendered by the known abuses of the Popish confessional. Some Romish writers have wrought at it with simplicity of purpose and with an honest conscience; but there are others (and some of them, as

* Any number of minor tractates and manuals have appeared, which it is needless to name.

will be seen, just now in the ascendant) who, from “lubricity of morals or the irritations of curiosity, have pushed their investigations into unhallowed paths of speculation. They have held aloft a torch for exploring guilty recesses of human life which it is far better for us all to leave in their original darkness.” But even the minute anatomy of monstrous offences in themselves confessedly rare and anomalous, or the vivid portraiture of extravagances of passion often all but imaginary and unknown as possibilities to the young and innocent, or dastardly invasions of the hallowed recesses of domestic life—none, nor all of these have done so much to discredit the casuist’s office as the common belief, resting upon too many facts to be denied, that its chief aim and tendency have been to invent hair-splitting processes by which doubts might be cast upon the plainest duties of life, and this, for the benefit of those who sought to evade them. The casuist is regarded as a sort of “shyster,” a Tombs-lawyer, in morals—given to special pleading and confounding the plain distinctions of moral conduct, and so defeating the ends of truth and justice, by shielding the offender from his proper deserts or plastering

over his conscience with the salve of a false absolution.*

But however we may arraign casuistry for its offences and abuses, it remains, and must, in the nature of things, do so, a necessary part of the training of every well-furnished guide of souls. It has its good as well as its bad uses. It is the practical and trained application of the fundamental principles of Christian morality to the affairs of life. The individual conscience, so long as it is exposed to doubt as to the quality of human actions, or as to the varying degrees of obligation amid the ever-shifting circumstances of life, must be tutored and guided; and clearly those who are ordained to the sacred function of tutoring and guiding it, ought to understand what they have to do and how to do it. The utter abandonment of it by so many, as a distinct branch of clerical study, is only one of the unhappy fruits of our vague and loose methods of dealing with individual souls. Whatever other results the revived discussion of the duty and mode of confession may lead to, it will not be without at least one benefit, if it shall induce the clergy to take up the subject in a serious way, and as one which they

* See Appendix A.

cannot neglect without damage to the sacred interests committed to their keeping. Except as it has been developed by such writers as Liguori and Escobar, it is not *necessarily* the product or the adjunct of the confessional. Its uses are older and wider than that which the practical system of Romanism has run out into so many dreadful corruptions and abuses.

I have said that the pastorate can reach individual souls and individual souls can reach the pastorate, without following in the ways of Rome or of an ultra-Protestant emotionalism. Some of you may desire to see the course marked out which promises to be equidistant from both. This I shall undertake to do, though of necessity so briefly as not to enable me to remove all doubt, or to meet all questions on the part even of those who are likely to sympathize with the tone and purpose of this inquiry. It is but an outline that I shall attempt to trace. To fill it up with due gradation of color and proportion among the parts would require a volume. I shall suggest, not describe; lay down certain general propositions, without attempting to demonstrate

their truth ; erect landmarks without mapping intermediate spaces.

In such a cure of souls as I am now supposing to be incumbent on us, the following points should be kept in the forefront of our work, so that the people may understand its conditions and limitations, and, understanding them, may not be led to expect from the clergy a sort of guidance and help which they could not give without transcending their authority as ministers of this Church.

(1) We are to do nothing that shall lessen in any soul the sense of personal responsibility to God, whether by a process of sapping and mining from within, or by a demand from without for the keys of the conscience. That responsibility is the central fact in our moral being ; and it must be protected and upheld at all hazards. The Gospel magnifies it, the Church develops it. God himself respects it as part of the foundation on which the works of His grace and providence are built up, and also as part of the dignity of a nature made in His own image. Let, then, the soul that seeks help understand that the help given will not put another will

in the place of its own will, or another conscience in the place of its own conscience.

(2) It should be clearly and strongly taught that the ideal spiritual life, the perfected life in Christ Jesus, is the life that draws nearer and nearer to the great end which the Gospel always aims at, viz., the gradual substitution in every soul of *a character for an outward law*, the steady progress toward a habit of loving obedience to God's will, which supersedes external rules and statutes. For, as the Apostle says, the law is dead to him that keeps it. But the more an internal character takes the place of external guidance, the less need will there be of outward helps of all kinds. Christ formed in us brings everything we need. The greater includes the less. His is the only will, His is the only conscience, His is the only personality in which ours can be merged and yet not lost, can be brought into subjection without hindrance or hurt to their liberty of choice and responsibility of action. This is wholesome doctrine for a certain class of minds who, because of disgust at their own weakness and vacillation, are always on the lookout for some strong hand to take them into its keeping—sentimental souls,

that crave the easy delights of noble dreams and aspirations, that dread any grapple of the will with evil, any pains of conscience engendered by remorse for sin ; intellectual souls, fond of the *cultus* of Christianity, passionate admirers of the *unities* and *catholicities* so often treated in prose and song, yet without nerve or backbone in any real conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Religiously, spiritually *characterless*, they instinctively turn to minute rules, to special directions, to artificial stays and props to brace their ravelling resolves and flabby, sinewless purposes. Sooner or later, if their steps tend that way, they will hail with joy the sharp-cut management of the confessional, and accept it as the shield of their faith and the helmet of their salvation.

(3) It is of moment that we prove to those who come to us for special counsel that in nine cases out of ten of real difficulty, the ordinary means of grace provided in the Church are sufficient ; that it is often rather a craving for some new expedient, a desire of change and novelty, than a real want that puts souls upon the search for special remedies and extraordinary means. Here, for example, is a per-

son who asks to be heard in private confession, and longs to work out some satisfaction for his supposed aggravated guilt by a painful penance. If the case be carefully inquired into, it will not unlikely be discovered that the person so applying for special care has not first in his own soul bewailed his sinfulness, nor confessed himself to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life ; has not, in fact, done any one of many things within the reach of every conscience troubled with the sense of sin. No soul should be encouraged to rely upon the *extraordinary* while the *ordinary* has not been exhausted, to come to the minister to quiet his conscience, when he has not done what he could, previously, to do so himself, or to open his grief when he has only vague notions of what his grief is, and leans upon the priest to tell him what it is. So, with over-scrupulous persons, and persons given to doubt and despondency on very slight grounds ; if treated too seriously, made too much of, allowed to tell their special trouble too often, they soon sink into the tone of feeling exhibited by beggars who parade their nakedness or deformity to excite the charity of the passer-by.

(4) Let us leave nothing unsaid or undone that will serve to show those who ask our special help in dealing with their sins, what does, and what does not belong to a healthy mode of self-examination. There is a morbid kind of introspection which leads to *brooding over sin* apart from any honest efforts to overcome it, or to *exaggerating sin* for the sake of magnifying the difficulty of repentance, or to *excusing sin*, in order to prove that no repentance is necessary. Before undertaking to help or comfort such a conscience, it must be taught plainly what, with an average of Christian knowledge, it ought to know already, viz., the nature of sin as defined by God's Word, its hold upon the heart and life, the ordinary forms it takes on in every soul, its degrees of guilt, the penalties which await it ; next the sorrow for it which worketh godliness, and the sorrow for it which needeth to be repented of ; and finally, the forsaking of the evil, without which all repentance is a hollow thing, not worth the breath it takes to utter it. At every stage of the process self-questioning, self-examination is indispensable ; and it is the duty of the wise guide of souls to push up steadily and boldly into the eye of the memory and the

conscience the particulars into which every one of the Ten Commandments may be resolved, so that by these the particulars of the soul's transgressions may be ferreted out and exposed to condemnation. And this is a task which earnest persons, in most instances, when told how to do it, will do better for themselves than any one else can do it for them.

(5) We must carefully distinguish between cases of conscience which require the casuist's skill to deal with them, and cases which can be met by a proper understanding and use of the divine law as developed in its spirit by the teaching of Christ. The former are not so numerous as is often supposed. Some inquirers for light, who profess to be very eager for a solution of their difficulties, are curiously fond of either subtlety or vagueness of statement. There are few cases of conscience which, when the enveloping mist of hazy language is scattered, are not reducible to simple issues of opposing motives and of apparently contradictory obligations. Somehow, there are many anxious and troubled souls that do not take readily to the easiest, most obvious way out of their difficulty. They like to be reasoned with, to be examined, to be ana-

lyzed, sharply questioned, handled as though their special grief was of the heaviest. They are scarcely content without they feel the trained casuist's knife dividing the joints from the marrow. One plainly-spoken, thoroughly-applied law of morals, or truth of the Gospel may be enough to meet their case ; but, like the leprous Syrian, who, when told to wash himself seven times in the river Jordan and be clean, was indignant at the prophet for prescribing such simple treatment, so these persons will have no trust in you as a guide unless you exhaust upon them the fine-spun subtleties of a well-furnished confessional.

(6) But there is one subject in particular which should be fully and explicitly treated in all our instructions, both public and private. Once properly understood by the faithful, it saves them much needless doubt and misgiving, and their guides much time and trouble. There is nothing in the Word of God, nothing in the Church's doctrinal, liturgical, or practical system that appears more plain and simple, when duly examined, than the matter of forgiveness of sin. And yet there is nothing, in fact, in either or all, about which there

are so many theories, so many schools of thought and practice, and, generally, so much vagueness and uncertainty among the people. No suitable occasion should be neglected for clear and definite teaching (1) as to the terms and conditions of forgiveness, so far as they relate to the transgressor ; (2) as to the ground and meritorious cause of forgiveness ; (3) as to the pledges and assurances of forgiveness—how it is conveyed and certified ; how far, especially in the matter of assurance, the forgiven penitent *may* accept the witness of his own feelings, and *may* count upon the rapture of pardon ; and how far, by divine arrangement, he *must* rely not only upon the witness of the Holy Spirit witnessing with his spirit internally, subjectively, but also and eminently witnessing through the one baptism for the remission of sins, and subsequently, at stated times, all through the Christian life, through the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, which, besides being eucharistic, sacrificial, commemorative, a token of unity in Christ and the Church, a bond of fellowship and communion between all believers, is also pre-eminently the Sacrament of forgiveness. In this connection we must

not shrink from handling fully and decidedly the whole subject of Confession and Absolution, words which some cannot even hear without nervous dread and apprehension, and yet words the true force and meaning of which the theological and moral drift of these times will oblige us to study with far more care than many have yet bestowed upon them.*

Thus far I have confined myself to directions and limitations to be brought clearly before the faithful who desire special pastoral help. But now I turn to those which relate immediately to the priest himself, and which he must obey if he hopes to do his duty to edification.

(1) He must have clear notions as to the nature and range of his authority. There are two kinds of authority, the disregard of either of which will impair his influence and hinder his work. There is moral authority, the essence of which is love, and the outward form of which is character shaped by love. This is the highest sort of power which one soul can wield over another. Stubborn wills and alienated hearts and soiled consciences bow down to this when they would do so to nothing else. But besides, there is the authority of a Divine Commis-

* See Appendix B.

sion, of a Sacred Office, in virtue of which the priest is required to exhort the people "to obey them which have the rule over them." The two authorities, blended together so that we cannot precisely discern where the one begins and the other ends, make the perfect guide of souls. Some are indifferent to the authority of office, but none will be indifferent to the authority arising from moral elevation, loving sympathy, and an evident desire to lighten the burdens of the weary and heavy laden. Where the former will not serve us, the latter must be our resource. Christ proved His love to men before He undertook to guide and govern them. His rulership over humanity is supreme, because it is bathed in the blood of His cross. No one can challenge it, because no one can challenge the service and sacrifice out of which it grew. The highest influence, the noblest authority of the ministry, can be reached only on the same conditions. The true shepherd must in some way give his life for the sheep, if their life is to be put into his keeping.

(2) He who would have the cure of souls in any worthy sense must familiarize himself not only with theology as the science of revealed religion, but

with Christian ethics—the science of duty, whose great aim is to form individual character after the pattern character of Christ. On one side it is the science of God's moral law; on the other it is the science of the human will, the conscience, the moral affections, the propensities and appetites of the flesh.

Omitting much that might be said under this head, I leave it with one general direction, which I deem of great moment. In questions of conscience, as in wider ones, affecting the spiritual life, some seem to think that their first duty is to break down and set aside, as of no account, the suggestions and motives of the natural conscience, the moral reason. The Gospel, it is said, has nothing to do with convictions of duty or estimates of human action emanating from so clouded and imperfect a source. The old man is to be put away that the new creature may take his place. He is simply and altogether ruin and rubbish, and as such must be cast out before the Holy Ghost can begin the masonry of the new temple. Now, this is not the less an exaggeration and a hindrance because it arises from a well-meant effort to assert the radical and absolute

sway of God's truth. It is an error at the very point where grace impinges on nature, where Christ touches the will and conscience. If we act upon it in our dealing with souls inquiring the way to the Cross, we are put at a serious disadvantage. We destroy the eye whose blindness we attempt to heal. We cut up by the roots the tree whose branches are to bear the grafts from the tree of life. Let us settle it clearly and once for all that Christianity does not claim to *create* morality, as though there had been none but for its advent, and would be none but for its presence. On the contrary, it cheerfully accepts what it finds and makes the most of it. It does not oppose natural morality, it does not accuse it of absolute inefficacy, it does not outlaw the motives drawn from conscience and the nature of things. Its great and peculiar office is to lead forth the conscience into a stronger and all-embracing light, and to energize the morality that springs from it with an irresistible motive power, whose source is the Word, the Spirit, the Example of Christ. Of this power the world knew nothing until His coming. The setting forth of this power and of its uses and modes of operation is the dis-

tinctive work of Christian ethics ; and the application of it, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to the individual conscience is an essential part of our work in the cure of souls. To perform this part well requires a grasp of the soul's want and of Christ's work, which too few of us possess.

(3) The kind of cure of souls about which I am speaking demands a *practical* knowledge (to be gained only by the study of our own hearts and lives, as well as of the hearts and lives of others) of the various phases of religious experience as produced either by various temperaments, or by various moods of any one temperament. There are the emotional and the unemotional, the quick and the slow, the fervid and the cold, the hopeful and the despondent, the reticent and the demonstrative, and each very largely governs the Christian's inner life. And then there are the shifting moods passing over each one of these types of character, of which due account must be taken if we are to touch their ills and aches and lapses with a discriminating hand. All Christians are not Christians after the same manner. Very often one element, moral, or emotional, or doctrinal, predominates and some

other suffers. There is no life without its weak side, no armor without its loose joint, its broken link. If we are to give the needed help, we must know where the weakness is ; if we are to aid in restoring a disturbed equilibrium, we must get at the force which has disturbed it.

(4) They who will seek counsel and direction will do so ordinarily on these five grounds :

I. Because of their besetting special sins and the temptations which draw them into these sins.

II. Because of distressing fluctuations of feeling arising from loss of poise and balance in their faith—these in turn arising from exaggeration or defect in one or more articles of the truth.

III. Because of ignorance or misconception affecting some fundamental principle of faith or morality.

IV. Because of sorrow and suffering, whether springing from their own conduct or from the visitation of God.

V. Because of doubts, doctrinal or ethical.

The foregoing is by no means an exhaustive catalogue of the grounds on which souls will come to the priest of God for counsel and help ; but it is

sufficiently complete for my present purpose. Let me take them up in the order named.

I. He who is charged with the cure of souls must know the sinfulness of sin not only as a general proposition, but the comparative guilt of particular kinds of sin and the peculiar guilt of this or that individual sin. It is one thing to know sin as it is treated in the books, as the theme of metaphysical or ethical inquiry, or as the material which enters largely into the construction of theological systems, and quite another thing to know it in the burns and bruises it inflicts on the soul. He must, therefore, acquire the faculty of handling it in its concrete shapes, as it issues, instinct with the life of wickedness, fresh from living wills and living hearts. To this end he must study it as God's law-expounders—prophets and apostles—have dealt with it. They do not so much denounce rebellion as rebels; not so much sin as sinners; not so much evil in general as evil-doers in particular. And coming forth from God's Word, he must lift the veil from the motives of men, and plant himself at the very centre of the struggle between the law and the law-breaker, between the individual will and the

temptations which assail it. Thus only can he appreciate the distinction between ordinary and special besetting sins ; between sins of infirmity and sins of presumption ; between sins of the flesh and sins of the intellect and the will ; between the sin of the hardened reprobate and the sin of the tender conscience only for the moment gone astray. Until this specific, concrete, practical knowledge has been attained, it will be only as a neophyte and a bungler that he will be able to prescribe disciplinary remedies for the penitent.

There is no casuistry so subtle, so ingenious, so fertile of expedients, so unscrupulous about means, as that which the Devil supplies to the sinner to enable him to excuse himself for the guilt, or to extricate himself from the consequences of vicious or ungodly living. Truth, honesty, purity, love, holiness, are poor casuists. They move straight on to their ends. They are children of the light and dwell in the light ; and souls under their sway fall spontaneously into their movement and aims. It is not of the private Christian, but of the official one, the ordained and trained physician of souls, that I am speaking. He must be skilled in noting and

comparing symptoms, in timing pulse-beats, in discerning false curvatures, in detecting incipient decay and gangrene. His business is to *cure* souls, as well as, in the exercise of another function, to feed them. What wonder that there is so little *curing* when so few put forth any serious effort to fit themselves for such a task !

I have spoken of the need of understanding the comparative guilt of certain classes of sins. Let me give an illustration of what I mean. There are the sins of the animal man and the sins of the spiritual man, those which mate us with brutes and those which mate us with devils ; the former issuing from the lusts of the flesh, the latter from the intellect and the will. There are the sins of unchastity, uncleanness, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like ; and then there are the sins committed under the influence of self-interest, hatred, envy, jealousy, cruelty, perfidy, malice ; the sins, too, of pride, ambition, and covetousness. Now, in the shallow ethics of the world and in the distorted ethics of many Christians, the brute-like sins are deemed more wicked than the devilish—the unchaste, the drunken, the beastly sinner is thought to

be, and is treated practically as, a far worse offender than the man of falsehood, perfidy, malice, jealousy, and revenge. The same set of people will look with horror upon the inebriate and with a very mild sort of indignation upon the cheat and the liar. In the average judgment, the proud, hateful, selfish character stands a much better chance than the glutton and the fornicator. Now, the ethics of the Gospel, as reflected in the words and deeds of Him to publish whom the Gospel was given to the world, take a radically different view of the comparative turpitude of these sins. There we find the sins of the flesh treated almost with leniency as compared with those of the will, those which disembodied spirits can commit: They who do the former shall, indeed, be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. But who are they that are condemned without qualification to everlasting fire? Who are they who are to be cast forth into outer darkness? Why, they who do not forgive as God has forgiven them; they who neglect to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; they who see Lazarus at the gate and do not pity him—the merciless, the hard-hearted, the selfish. It is perfectly certain

that our Lord considered an omission of charity a darker fact than a sin of the flesh. In his eyes a hypocrite was worse than a fornicator ; a hater of his brother, than a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber ; the covetous man going about with his heart and his hand shut against the poor was the object of a far more intense scorn than the miserable wretch sleeping out his debauch in the gutter. To the woman taken in adultery Christ says : “ Neither will I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more.” To the men who plundered the widow and the fatherless, He says : “ How shall ye escape the damnation of hell ?” The model social and moral reformer of these days has forgotten this ; and it is to be feared that many whose vocation it is to deal with cases of conscience and to discipline notorious offenders, whose vices spot our feasts of charity and defile our courts and sanctuaries, do not sufficiently remember it. Even our Christian morality is infected with the old Manichean heresy ; else how should it have come to pass that a bad will, striking at the very sovereignty of God and at the moral order of the universe, should escape with a lighter

sentence from the tribunal of judgment than a lawless lust of the flesh ?

II. In most manuals for private use, and in most works treating of the interior religious life, enough has not been made of the unrest and anxiety, and sometimes of the painful anarchy, engendered by the loss of poise and balance between belief and motives, between our creed as a whole and the parts of it which actually sway our thoughts and feelings and every-day life. A healthy spiritual life can be the product only of the whole truth. A fragmentary and hence a restless and disorderly life must result from a fragmentary conception of the truth. It is the complete, not the broken, dismembered Christ formed within us that issues in "the hope of glory." Now, it is the task of the guide of souls to correct this kind of disturbance, and to this end he must press on until he find the errors, whether of excess or of defect, in faith or in practice ; and finding them, he must cure them by re-establishing the equilibrium, and with it the regulating power which can preserve it. He must recall what has been forgotten, tone down what has been exaggerated, lift up what has been depressed. In the cure

of souls no article of dogmatic or moral theology can be overlooked. In preaching it is often otherwise. Not doctrines, perhaps, are omitted, but needful aspects and bearings of doctrines, points of view, angles of insight, often are. It has been well said that "it is with all individual Christianity as it is with forms of human government. At first each of them corresponds to the general idea of society, then more particularly to some one of the conditions of social life. Each has a principle from which it borrows its form; but each also tends to exaggerate the principles on which it is founded, as if that principle were the social principle itself. Pure Christianity, which has been in some part defined, while pure society has been in no part, has a principle which cannot be exaggerated, because it includes all principles—that is to say, all the weights and counter-weights of truth. But with no individual has it this largeness and this perfection. All individual Christianity makes a principle to itself, which it incessantly tends to exaggerate, instead of tempering it with the opposite principle." To this contemperature, or harmony of the truth, the individual must be recalled if he is to enjoy real peace.

But, again, some persons throw themselves out of balance, and so out of rest and joy in the Holy Ghost, either by too much self-demonstration or by too much self-concealment. Of the former no one in this age needs to be reminded, though in many it needs to be held in check. The latter is exceptional, but not infrequent, and deserves mention because commonly overlooked. There are those whose life is so hidden with Christ that the world knows little or nothing of them, and the Church itself takes little note of them. There is not only the hidden life, but there are also hidden saints—too much hidden for their own or the Church's good; shining with a strong light inwardly, outwardly in the shadow; some among the poor, some among the sick, some among the forsaken, some among the rich, some among those in the high places of learning and power, who veil themselves, their motives, their deeds, their sacrifices, and are content to go through life underrated, misunderstood, even misrepresented. The temple of their faith is built up like that of old, without noise of any tool—"rising like the flowers in the open spaces of trackless forests, growing silently and unseen of

men, casting the treasure of their beauty and fragrance immediately into the arms of God." Many of them, if it cannot be said that they are born Christians, certainly grow up into the full stature of Christians, with little apparent effort, with almost no painful conflicts, and with very little formal inquiry into the grounds of what they hold. They think little of their religion, because it is not in their nature to think much. They *feel* all that others *think*. Logically, they know nothing, but in the sphere of conscience and will they know everything. To the outward eye they have no method about it, and yet they are under a severe self-discipline. The Church needs to see more of them for its own benefit. They need for their own health and peace, as well as for their usefulness, more contact with all life about them. Their life is timid, cramped, powerless in its manifestations, because themselves are abnormally placed. It is for us to search after such souls and do what we can to press them more to the front, where the light that is in them shall be seen of men, as the true light that cometh down from above.

III. I come now to the case of those who will, or

ought to seek counsel because of ignorance or misconception touching some fundamental principle of faith or morals. It is surprising how much of both there is among those who have had the opportunity (and who seem to have used it) of religious instruction. Both pass unnoticed, excite no remark, create no discomfort, until something occurs to drive the mind in upon itself for light and guidance. Then for the first time it realizes how little it has profited by what it has heard ; how, though it has seemed to be all the while learning, it has never come to the knowledge of the truth—an available, coherent knowledge at all adequate to meet the inevitable self-questionings of an awakened soul. Arrested in its course, confronted with its half-remembered Baptismal obligations, or with the yet more definite and pressing form of them developed by Confirmation, compelled to find answers to a score of questions respecting faith and practice, it suddenly, and with pain, perhaps, awakes to the fact that it has been for years using words and hearing them used, words standing for matters of the most vital moment, without any sense of their real meaning. There may be a tolerably rich Christian

vocabulary and yet no genuine knowledge. It is astonishing how long we may toss words about, one to another—words coined in the most approved mints, even those of inspiration itself—without being intelligently sure of what they really express. Take, for example, the terms which embody the objective verities of the Gospel, such as mediation, sacrifice, atonement, redemption, regeneration, or others representing subjective acts and frames, such as faith, repentance, grace, love, or of any one of a hundred others. Thousands of intelligent people are perfectly familiar with the terminology of divine truth so far as sound and spelling go. Its words and phrases are heard so often that the hearer drifts insensibly into certain vague notions based on a sort of presumptive knowledge, which, in the hour of trial, when the heart far more than the head insists upon a clearer perception of its own ills and lapses, and of God's remedies for them, is no more the knowledge needed than the fog-wreaths around the mountain-tops are the mountains themselves.

And while I am on this point, I may say, further, that this vagueness of view as to the recognized and accepted verbal pivots of God's truth, running all

the way from obscure apprehension down to positive ignorance, hinders or defeats the preacher's work far beyond what most of us imagine. A sermon is carefully wrought out with the best learning and the nicest rhetorical art. It marches steadily on, at every step gaining in fervor and power, to its concluding appeal, which is enforced with an unction of feeling and energy of manner that ought to carry everything before them. When all is over, the preacher is saddened, humiliated, perhaps discouraged, to find that his message has died away on the hollow air, leaving behind it no sign, the souls he expected to reach unmoved, nothing remembered or spoken of except the style, the choice figures of speech, the apt citations from the Scriptures or from general literature. He endeavors to account for the mortifying failure. He imagines every cause but the true one. The sockets in which the joints of his sermon played, the *nexus* of his argument, in more than one instance consisted of single words or phrases, which he used with a perfectly definite meaning, but which, to the majority of his hearers, were about as intelligible as would have been so many algebraic signs. And what is more,

it will not be until the preacher has left study and pulpit behind him and passed out into the actual lives, the living experiences, the hidden wants of his flock, taken up one by one, handled in individual cases and in private, that he will see why his well-forged shots have fallen short of, or missed the target.

But this is not the only ignorance that will oblige awakened souls to seek for special instruction and guidance. There is another ignorance even more difficult to deal with, because more subtle in its influences and less obvious in its forms. It is no unusual thing to find a bright intellect mated with a blind conscience, much culture dwelling in close intimacy with dark and dull moral affections. Large attainments in one direction may delude us into the belief that they are equally so in another direction, where our interest especially centres. This, truly, is a reading generation. The popular curiosity wanders at will. The press is ubiquitous, and though not reverential on religious subjects, at times not even decently respectful, yet it gives large space to religious themes and interests. So that, though the Sunday-school and the Pulpit be not taken into ac-

count, and our view be confined to the secular and the religious press, we may fairly assume the existence of a considerably high average of Christian intelligence among the people. And yet what pastor has not been shocked at the ignorance on elementary questions which he has unearthed in minds of more than ordinary cultivation, and enjoying habitual contact with the best sources of religious knowledge?

The Scriptures are not read, whatever else may be, far less studied. The Church is known as very little more than an existing institution, without living roots in the past, without a great and wonderful history attesting God's presence not only in itself, but in the affairs of the world. It is needless to speak of the treatment given to the doctrines of Christianity, for it has become the fashion to decry these in favor of the moral, the sentimental, the æsthetic side of it. Few there are who find their duty or their pleasure in studying them. They are set aside and even ridiculed in some quarters as "the withered leaves," "the sapless husks," "the dry bones" of religion, with which really cultured and progressive minds have no vocation to meddle.

The young, as a rule, have been for a generation past, and are now being, reared in the same notions and in the practice engendered by them, and, I may add, in the ignorance and misconception which are the fruits of both.

But it is not so much of this sort of ignorance as of moral ignorance, in the midst of much formal, technical knowledge of the truth, that I wish to speak. God's Word, after it is done speaking to us, and its task is finished, as a medium of light from heaven to earth, reminds us that after all its varied, vivid, complete communications of the divine will to man, he may yet be almost as much in the dark as though they had not reached him. The natural man is at enmity with God ; his understanding is darkened, his heart alienated, so that he cannot perceive the things of God. Spiritual truth, because it is spiritual, must be spiritually discerned. Now, it is this law which so many with whom we have to deal are constantly, persistently disregarding. They insist upon handling *intellectually* what, if it is to have power over them, must be handled *spiritually*. The guide of souls has no more stubborn difficulty to contend with. It meets him at

every turn. There is only one thing left for him to do. He must, by persuasion and entreaty, bring the soul thus hindered to its knees in prayer for the light in which alone it can see light. He must deal with it as Christ dealt with those who gathered about Him in the synagogue and the temple, on the sea and the hill-side. The particulars of His dealing would be too large a subject to go into in this connection. The key to its marvellous magnetism, its irresistible power, its inexhaustible range of adaptation will not escape us if, as His deputies and ambassadors, we study as we ought the records of His character and work. The love of both, wonder at, gratitude for, both, drew men to Him, and, once drawn there, they caught something by the contact, call it what we may—grace, virtue, power, or what not—something that lifted the heart above the intellect, the conscience above the understanding, the will above the propensities of the animal man, and so enabled the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and as both cause and effect of the change, brought man into conformity with that universal law of spiritual truth, viz., that the things of the Spirit must be spiritually discerned. Now,

in the work of guiding individual souls, we, as the ordained representatives of the ever-living Christ, and empowered by the Holy Ghost to carry on His ministry among men, must bring them to Him so that He may do for them just what He did for those who of old went forth from His presence and His touch, crying out, "I was blind, and now I see; I was lame from my mother's womb, and now I walk; I had an unclean spirit, and now I am clothed and in my right mind."

Do you say such direction as this is too indefinite, that it does not give the particulars, step by step, of the true mode of treating the ignorant and, because ignorant, the spiritually dead? I reply, the power derived upon us by Christ to teach and guide, and upon the souls whom we teach and guide, can no more be described in particulars or resolved into simpler elements, and yet do its work and be what it is, than the atmosphere which vitalizes our lungs, and through them our blood, or gravity, which holds all things in their places. It is to us one force, one energy, just as Christ, its source, is one. It is continuous in its manifestation and ubiquitous in its presence. Its objective centre is

Christ Himself, its subjective, every soul, whether priest or layman, high or low, bond or free, that accepts and reproduces it as the one living power which can turn the sinner from his sin and bestow upon him the gift of eternal life. There are different *degrees*, but not different *kinds*, of this power. Some may have more and some less of it, but what they have is all of the same kind. And woe to the pastorate that has none of it ; woe rather to the man who can be content with such a pastorate, the form without the power, the body without the soul, orders without grace, the holy priesthood without a call. Erudition, culture, eloquence, personal gifts, and attractions may float a man and give him something of a figure as a preacher, but in the actual cure of souls all these are but the fringes of the garment of power. The garment itself must be woven of the Holy Ghost after the pattern of that worn by the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.

IV. As Christianity is the religion *for* the transgressor because it is the religion *of* a Divine Saviour ; so it is the religion *for* the suffering because it is the religion *of* a Divine Sufferer. Rich as it is in its overtures to the sinner, it is not more so

than it is in the helps which it offers to the troubled and the sorrowing. And what it is in itself, just that it has been throughout its history. In every age its formal theological literature has been no more varied and abundant than its literature of consolation. That such should have been the case is only what might be expected ; for as Christianity was intended to provide for all the moral needs of man, so eminently was it intended to meet equally those twin facts in his life—sin and sorrow. Of necessity, this dual function is repeated and exemplified in the pastorate charged with the cure of souls. Practically and theoretically considered, it would be difficult to determine whether Christ's deputies are more occupied in the work of publishing the terms of the remission of sin and administering the seals of forgiveness, than in the work of comforting the distressed and the afflicted. Certain it is that no priest can be properly trained and furnished for his high office who is not equally qualified for both these tasks. To teach and to comfort are only different sides of the same commission, and the training that fits him to do the one ought to fit him to do the other. And yet many are they who are successful

teachers, but unsuccessful comforters. They can expound well the truths and promises of God's Word revealed to lighten our darkness and soothe our troubles, but they lack the gentle tact and the quick sympathy needed to bring them home. How many can preach patience and resignation with almost angelic tenderness, who fail in their pastoral dealings to excite and develop these graces in individual hearts. The fervid tongue in the pulpit somehow dwindles away into cold silence in the chamber of sickness and in the house of the mourner. How sadly, sometimes, able and godly men disappoint themselves and others in their private ministrations amid scenes of trial and grief, where sermons about Christ the Consoler must give place to counsels fresh from the heart of Christ and bound upon the aching, lacerated soul as the skilful surgeon puts the lint into the gaping wound or the bandage on the broken limb. Some lack nerve and self-possession, and so are partially unmanned by the emergency ; some lack the sympathetic temperament, a deficiency which no amount of study and experience can remedy ; while some again are inefficient because they have failed to draw up into

their own hearts the wealth of consolation whose golden threads are woven into every page of God's Word. Now, the weaker we are on this side of our pastorate, the harder we should apply ourselves to overcome the weakness. Those, in effect, are only half-truths which we proclaim in public and fail to apply in private. We were ordained to console as well as to preach. Indeed, our ministry is one of consolation, because it is one of reconciliation ; and the Holy Ghost, as the guide into the way of all truth, is not more operative in the latter than, as the Comforter, he is in the former. To be lame in either ministry is, as ambassadors of Christ and witnesses of the Holy Ghost, to present to a world of gloom and wretchedness a broken image of Him who came to be its light, and a stifled message of Him who came to be its comfort.

It does not fall within my design to go into the details of the training required by this side of the sacred office, nor into particulars touching the exercise of it when it has been duly trained. My purpose will be met by calling attention to a few great guiding principles.

(1) Most persons, so long as they are untouched

by serious trial, are content with a surface view of the wretchedness that stretches out from them on all sides of the world. It is simply one of the aspects of life with which they are not inclined to meddle. The mystery, if not the agony, of it repels them, and they take refuge, amid the dark questions which it evolves, in a sort of tranquil vagueness of conception, or in such platitudes and generalities as have been made current by the customary language of sorrow-smitten hearts in all ages of mankind. They behold, they pity, and then turn away exclaiming: "Such is the world!" "So it always has been, so it must be." "It is inscrutable; there is no help for it." But when themselves are broken upon the wheel, or scorched by the fire of that experience which, sooner or later, comes upon all, they are swept on as by an irresistible impulse to questionings which bring them face to face with that darkest of all problems—the origin of evil. They pierce through, one after another, all the deepening layers of thought, all the methods and appliances of consolation, whether suggested by the speculative reason, or the equally speculative imagination, or formally presented by Divine Revelation,

pushing on and on along the shadowed path of inquiry, until the demand leaps imperiously from their lips ; Whence came the hated, dreadful thing ? Why is it here ? Why was it permitted ? What does it mean ? How could human life and the world, which is the scene of its development, have become what they are under the government of a God of love—if there be such a Being ? There is little satisfaction in telling them that these questions have been asked from the beginning, or that human reason, often as it has grasped them with passionate eagerness and defiant resolve, has, after every attempt, fallen back on itself in helpless perplexity and in hopeless defeat. And the case practically is not mended much by pointing them to the testimony of Revelation. For that simply asserts the facts in all their sharp antagonism, with no attempt at what man considers an explanation. It tells who God is and what He does ; it declares His absolute perfections and guards them against assault at all points. Whatever the evil, whatever the wretchedness, it affirms that He is not their Author. The world has become what it is by the creature's, not the Creator's, will. It is out of joint, unhinged, disor-

dered, groaneth and travaileth in pain, because man has lapsed from what God made him, and in the exercise of his moral liberty has broken God's statutes.

The latest utterance of philosophical wisdom affirms that the world's line of movement is that of progress by evolution, that of growth toward perfection by the struggle and conflict of powers shut up within itself, that the evil which disorders and poisons and smites us is not what the Bible means by sin, but the imperfection, bound up with limitations of will and intelligence, which humanity somewhere in the rolling ages is destined to overcome by the gradual unfolding of what is in itself. Christianity, on the other hand, affirms that the transgression of the law, which is sin, is the parent of the anarchy and woe which shake the universe and rend the heart of man, that the only real progress is of the nature of a recovery of what has been lost, that man's destiny can be realized only by a restoration, to be wrought out by a redemption offered to man by the grace of God incarnated and personated in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son.* The two affirma-

* So great has been the progress of late of what is known as "The Theory of Evolution," and such has been the dogmatic

tions, the two theories, with their respective instrumentalities and methods, are in radical and irreconcilable opposition. It is impossible to hold fast by both, and the quality and degree of the comfort which we can administer to disquieted or crushed and bleeding hearts will be determined by our

assurance with which it has been taught, that not a few Christian teachers, if they have not lost *faith* in the Christian doctrine that all true progress of the human race is of the nature of a recovery of a *lost* perfection, or a restoration of a *lost* type, have at least grown timid in asserting it. We have grown so familiar with modes of speech implying or affirming the gradual supplanting, throughout the world of organic existences, of lower by higher forms, according to a universal law of development or evolution, that we are falling, little by little, into the way of giving a passive assent to what is so positively asserted, but what is as far off from demonstrative proof as when it was first propounded. It is certain that this theory, when summoned before the highest tribunals of criticism, has, it is not too much to say, ignominiously failed to win a place among ascertained and established truths. The latest verdict from the best authorities relegates it to the list of clever but unproven hypotheses. If there be subtracted from the process by which it has been built up, what has been done by *imagination* and *dogmatism*, and with this the dropped links in the chain of evidence and the facts that yet stubbornly refuse to be dovetailed into this pretentious speculation, there is not so much left of it as some suppose. Of late, moreover, there are signs, not to say solid proofs, of such a new and radically different reading

choice of the one or the other of these conceptions of the world and of human life. If we accept the latest philosophy, we must be content to stand speechless amid scenes of suffering, to bind up no wounds, to pour into aching souls no mollifying

of the facts accumulated with so much labor and research by the advocates of evolution, as to portend a violent and destructive reaction against its triumphantly heralded conclusions. The evolutionists have argued much in favor of their theory from the long-received and long-undisputed undulatory theory of light and sound. This theory has been fatally damaged, not to say completely overthrown, by the recent investigation and reasoning of A. Wilford Hall in his "Problem of Human Life"—a work that carries the war into the very heart of Darwin's citadel. But more to my purpose is another able and striking contribution to the literature of the general subject, by T. Warren O'Neill, entitled "The Refutation of Darwinism, and the Converse Theory of Development." His design is to show that "the very same facts which Darwin confesses his inability to explain, yet upon which he relies to sustain his theory, may be explained in a way which signally disproves the theory that man and other species of animal and species of plant were evolved from lower types." "All of Darwin's facts are taken for granted, as are all his scientific factors. The same facts, however, are differently apportioned, with but a slight variation from Darwin's mode of distribution of them."

Reversing the evolution view, this author insists that the prototype of each species was an organism of a higher state of devel-

ointment. We can only, with folded hands and silent tongues, watch the mighty machine while it grinds hearts and wills, flesh and spirit to powder, telling those who are thus broken and triturated under the ponderous hammer of invariable, immu-

opment than the type of such species as now found under nature. Adverse conditions entailed the suppression of the characters, and the mere *restoration* of the favorable conditions secures their redevelopment. All reduction, as claimed by the author, from the typical number of parts and suppression of function counts as a *degradation* of the animal or plant, and their recovery as an *improvement*, which favorable conditions may secure.

It may be that this writer's general view may be overthrown, and his reasoning shown to be defective ; but it cannot be denied that both are as plausible and apparently as well sustained as the theory of Mr. Darwin and the arguments by which he supports it. I have referred to the work only as a sign of the coming reaction, and as going to prove that the old doctrine, that all true progress of the race is of the nature of *a recovery and a restoration*, has a solid basis not only in Revelation, but also in science. The issue between the two theories is by no means settled, nor are the arguments and evidences all on one side, as some seem to suppose. In fact, though much has been said against the Bible view, yet not enough has been *proved* to shake our conviction of its truth, or to make us timid and reluctant in asserting it.

Quite in harmony with this view of the origin and natural history of man, are the results arrived at by M. Le Page

table law, or whelmed in the bottomless gulf of a fatalism which is only another name for this notion of law, that there is no comfort for them save what they can derive from a vague hope of a possible perfection to be evolved afar off, in inconceivably

Renouf, in his "Hibbert Lectures" (1879), "On the Origin and Growth of Religion, as Illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt." So far from Fetichism being the first step in the growth of religion, he claims that the earliest religion of Egypt (the earliest of known religions) was monotheistic, and that the earliest developments of Monotheism were the noblest and purest. "It is," he says, "incontestably true that the sublimer portions of the Egyptian religion are not the comparatively late results of a process of development or diminution from the grosser; and that its last stage—that known to the Greek and Latin writers, heathen or Christian—was by far the grossest and most corrupt. Renouf quotes with approval M. de Rouge, who says: "It is more than five thousand years since, in the valley of the Nile, the hymn began to the unity of God and the immortality of the soul; and we find Egypt in the last ages arrived at the most unbridled Polytheism. The belief in the unity of God and in His attributes as Creator and Lawgiver of man, whom he has endowed with an immortal soul—these are the primitive notions, enchased like indestructible diamonds in the midst of the mythological superfetations accumulated in the centuries which have passed over that ancient life." So that, religiously, man's life is a degeneration, and his true progress now of the nature of a recovery or a restoration.

distant ages, from the embryos of to-day passing up by "the survival of the fittest" into the completed types of the future. How soothing and strengthening such comfort is, how efficacious it is in drying up human tears over the sick, the dying, and the dead, or amid any of the trials which moisten the brow as with the sweat of an insupportable agony, they only can tell who have tried it. It would seem as though such a view could offer but two things to be done—both involving a return to a worn-out paganism—either with the stoic to despise, or with the epicurean to laugh at, what we cannot help.

(2) Now, these thoughts fairly pave the way to a consideration of the two rival modes of dealing with evil when developed into actual pain—the one that of the natural reason, carrying essentially the same idea through all its various treatments; the other that of Christianity. Pain is evil intensified and at work upon sensitive beings. It is the wide-spread disorder and unhingement of nature localized in individual bodies and individual souls. As such, no grade or aspect of human life escapes its visitation. It sweeps along the nerves, darts through every

fibre of the flesh, nestles in the intellect, eats into the will, and searches as with a point of steel the recesses of the heart. I take it as a fact of experience, a fact bound up with our earthly inheritance, and, wherever we find it, wet with tears and clouded with mystery. Accepting it as a fact, how do the two rival systems—the one of nature, the other of grace, the one of man, the other of God—handle it? If ours is to be a ministry of consolation, we must see definitely and palpably the grounds on which it rests, and the resources at its command. There can be no more practical and urgent question named in connection with the cure of souls. If the painter must know his colors and the law of their combination, if the physician must know the remedies he applies, the surgeon, the instruments he handles, the chemist, the ingredients and properties of matter, the lawyer, the statutes which regulate the administration of justice, so must the priest understand the means at his disposal when he deals with bruised or broken hearts.

What, then, have these systems to say for themselves? Pain, says reason, is a thing of mystery and power; whence it came and why it works cannot

certainly be affirmed. There are some grounds for believing it not utterly inconsistent with the justice and benevolence of the Supreme Being, if there be one. We know it has some uses, and it may have others. It makes us vigilant and cautious against danger. Itself, in part, the fruit of carelessness, or ignorance, or excess in dealing with nature's laws, it warns us not to repeat them. It is, therefore, monitory and protective. But, besides this, pain adds a relish to pleasure by now and then breaking its current. It is the shadow needed to bring out the light, the discord that enhances the harmony. And, then, it gives a wholesome tone to some of the virtues. It says to firmness, do not be shaken; to fortitude, hold fast; to courage, do not be afraid. Here, reason, in its moral use and explication of this profound and universal fact, must stop. It has no other word for the suffering and anguish of mankind. It has no voice of mercy, however it may have a look of sympathy. Certainly it has no tears, no rescues, no alleviations of love to offer. The torn body and the stricken soul plead in vain for something more. Man is left a stranger, an orphan, to decipher for himself the dark handwriting of grief and ruin

graven upon his life by an unseen power. What matters it that he is told by the epicurean to escape pain by inventing new pleasures, or by the stoic to disregard it as a thing too mean to make the will tremble. This is only the comfort which the blind give to the blind.*

Turn now to Christian teaching, and weigh what it says and does in respect to this fact of pain. It does not do away with its mystery, or reduce its power, or lessen its bitterness as an actual, inevitable experience, or in any way represent it to be other than precisely what it is. It is inscrutably and indissolubly linked to sin, and came into this frame of things with a fatal lapse of our nature. Under the first Adam, and as a fact of nature, it was part of the wages of sin; but in Christ, the second Adam, from heaven, it became also a power of cleansing and perfection. He permits it to abide

* "It is remarkable that men so acute as Zeno and many of his disciples of the Stoic school did not perceive and acknowledge that if *pain* were not an *evil*, cruelty would not be a vice. One such consequence of their system was enough to demonstrate its untenableness."—Sir James Mackintosh's "Progress of Ethical Philosophy, Retrospect of Ancient Ethics" (p. 102).

in His kingdom, but He has reduced it to subjection and converted it into a recognized instrument in the discipline of His people. It is now the minister not more of God's severity, than of God's mercy. To the godless it is still what it once was—a dark and crushing reality ; to the godly it is as the refiner's fire, purging out the soils of the spiritual nature. The school of suffering is the school of sanctity. The path of trial winds out of the world up to our true home. Thus pain becomes the surest and strongest bond of union with the true and the perfect. We find it a fact of nature, an experience of man, a thing sharp, searching, and terrible. A divine faith takes it into its crucible, and it comes out a new power, baptized and ordained unto new ministries and fellowships. Thus transformed, suffering rises to its noblest aspect and re-appears in the form of self-sacrifice—the one irresistible power in the conquest of moral evil. It was the law of the new creation that our Divine Saviour should be “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” and it is part of this law that they whom He delivers shall be conformed to Him in this quality of His perfection. So deep is this

principle laid in the ethics of redemption that St. Paul does not hesitate to argue, in the words, "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" that to be free from suffering, to know no chastisement, is an exemption to be feared rather than coveted, as clouding or excluding the brightest tokens of sonship in the family of God.

These, then, are the uses and ends of pain in the discipline of Christianity. It melts and casts out the stubborn dross of nature. It transfigures the inward life into the image of the Lord and Giver of life. Its strokes are those of the chisel rounding the rough marble into heavenly sculpture. It gives to unheeded truth a more piercing emphasis. It strips life of its illusions and carries the soul down into the region of reality. It tames the will and moderates the desires. By the things we suffer it teaches obedience, clears the eye and strengthens the wing of faith, reducing us to a childlike submission under the Father's hand. It presses upon us our share in the struggle between good and evil, and interprets to us the dreadful problem which hangs so heavily upon the world's life. It suggests, nay, demands a future of rest as the sequel to the present

trial. There is a glimpse, an intimation, of immortality in its very affinity with death. Pain, the dreadful, vivid, incomprehensible fact. It is no longer the blind and aimless force which binds humanity, like another Prometheus, to the rock of torture. The Word of God gives it an origin, a use, an end; with every look of agony, every wail of grief from the body or the soul, it blends the tones of heavenly pity and spreads over them the halo of divine promise.

Now, these general aspects of the subject have been considered, only the better to prepare the way for an examination of some points with which we are often required to deal in the discharge of our pastoral duty, as guides and consolers of the troubled and the sorrowing.

(3) Of all the forms of misery that can come upon mortals, there is none like that which arises from voluntary and conscious sin. Such sin leaves no doubt as to our accountability. Our own personality lies at its core, and no question can arise as to the justice of the pain, whatever it be, inflicted upon us. Ourselves and not another is the cause of our suffering. If we yield to temptation and run into

evil courses, it is our own act. We can find no relief in side issues, no comfort in blaming others. When our sin finds us out, we must face it and own it as the creature of our own making. After all abatements and palliations have been pleaded, an aroused conscience will go straight to its work and will cry out : " Thou art the man." Our offences may be of a sort that will intensify hidden remorse by public disgrace, and stamp upon our misery the penalties of violated law and the rebukes of the honest and the pure with whom we have associated ; or they may be secret, and, therefore, known only to God. The guilt of the latter may be greater, though the punishment, for the present, may be less. The state of mind produced by these personal sins runs all the way from passive regrets down into piercing grief. Upon the blights and scars and agonies they inflict it were needless to dwell. They have been described almost as often as they have been experienced, but no description ever given can match the reality. No man knows how deep and wide his soul is, or what are its capabilities of suffering, until he has grappled with evil consciously taken up into his own will, and there melted and

coined into actual wickedness by the heat of indulged passion. No man knows, too, what the keenest pain is until the sense of guilt clouds and shakes and rends him, driving peace from his borders, turning all sweets into bitterness, and all hopes into fears. To live with it is death, to run away from it is impossible. No wonder that the world is so full of fever and unrest, when it is so largely made up of lives thus agitated and distressed.

To the cry, "Why art thou so vexed, O my soul! and why art thou so disquieted within me?"* the only answer, among all that can be given, that goes to the bottom of the trouble, is that which declares, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."† Now, of those thus driven and tossed, some will seek us, but more will have to be sought by us. In either case, our sympathy and pity, however freely given, can do little more than remove the barriers to a frank and full disclosure of the soul's hurt. The priest is shut up to one way of dealing with it. He is allowed no discretion as to the remedy to be applied, or as to the peace and comfort which he is authorized to promise. He acts

* Psalm 42 : 14.

† Isaiah 57 : 21.

not in his own name, but in the name of the God of all peace and comfort, and as the representative of Him by whose mediation alone the offender can have access to the Father of mercies. He must, therefore, with as few preliminaries and as little delay as possible, lead the bruised and heavy-laden into the very heart of the divine scheme for the remission of sins. Laying aside the generalities of pulpit speech, and with them a good deal of the knowledge gained by routine studies in theology, and even in the Scriptures, and, besides these, most of the technical directions and rules found in books on personal religion, he must realize how, at the first approach to the guilty soul, he is placed at the very focus on which converge the antagonizing forces of heaven and earth, of good and evil, of the cross of Christ and a fallen humanity ; and by the sparks of fire thrown out by the colliding flint and steel he must shape his counsels. Many a man is wretched because of his guilt who has not taken the first step toward a true penitence. The instinct of self-defence, self-extenuation, will incline him to invent excuses and apologies. All sin in general is very wicked, but his sin in particular is not very

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grievous because committed under peculiar circumstances of trial. He was surprised ; he was taken at the weak point ; he was beguiled by bad influences around him ; he was led astray by vicious companions ; he did not mean to tamper with his conscience or to leave the door open to the enemy ; the evil actually done is so much greater than he expected, at the start, that he cannot account for it ; one step followed another so imperceptibly, that none alarmed him or summoned him to put forth any special resistance ; bad as the total result is, no one is so perplexed and amazed at it as himself ; sorry as he is at what has happened, it cannot be as bad as it seems because it has come upon him in such a way, and the only palpable and disturbing experience he has is that of the misery which it has produced.

Now, in such a case, not a step can or will be taken toward the comfort of forgiveness—the only real comfort that can be had, until all this special pleading has been brushed aside. Such a man must be brought to see his sin as it is in itself and as God sees it, and not merely as himself may regard it. To do this, the priest must leave nothing un-

done. He must work on until he can touch the mainspring of the conscience, and let loose its latent power of exposure and rebuke. Alongside of it, and as serving to cut away all obstructions to its verdict, he must put the violated law of God, speaking by its spirit, not its letter ; and to both must be added, as the final power of appeal and conviction, God's hatred of all sin, as exhibited not only in his dealings with men, but above all in that most awful event in human history—the passion and death on the Cross of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. If none, nor all of these combined, create in the offender's heart a moving, melting sense of the enormity of his sin, the case, for the present, is closed ; or, if continued, continued only by prayer that the Holy Ghost will do for it what He promises to do for all who are dead in their trespasses and sins. But assuming that faith has begun to work, and that some adequate sense of the power, the guilt, the penalty of sin has been awakened by these means, then will follow the several parts of a true repentance—confession, contrition, satisfaction, upon the details of which I need not dwell further than to remark : (1) That if the confession

made to God do not pacify the penitent, then let him be moved to call in the aid of the priest to help in lifting the burden from his soul, opening up to him, as Christ's deputy, the hurt and grievance under which he mourns ; (2) That the teaching and direction shall be clear and positive, as upon all the parts involved, so especially upon the duties of reparation for wrongs done and of amendment of life—the most difficult among the fruits of repentance, and therefore the most likely to be slurred or postponed.

The popular religion of the time treats thinly and lamely many things in the Christian life, but none, I think, so much so as the subject of repentance. It is a subject especially attractive to the average religious teacher, because it is so full of emotional experience and abounds in frames and agitations and tears. But these ordinarily may be left to take care of themselves, if we can be sure of the ripened fruit in the shape of restitution and amendment. These are reached, in some cases, only through profoundly disturbing exercises of the soul, and, in others, through comparatively little outwardly-manifested feeling. It matters little whether the emo-

tion involved be much or little, provided the result be reached. But the requirements of faith and repentance having been met, equal attention must be given to the divine method for conveying and sealing forgiveness with its peace and comfort, by the one Baptism for the remission of sins, and then for the deepening and strengthening of these gifts by the grace of Confirmation, and then still further on, for their perpetual nourishment and growth by the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, and yet further, for the continuous development of those graces of the new life which, as evident tokens of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness and with it the highest joy, the sweetest comfort of the saints.*

(4) But when the guilt of sin has been pardoned, and its penalty remitted, and the bitter sorrow of it done away, some of its consequences still

* The treatment of sin after baptism is involved in the discipline applicable to the *Christian* penitent. Ordinarily, this discipline is part of the required preparation for the Holy Communion, in which, by Christ's own appointment, all who turn unto him, at any stage of the Christian life, with hearty repentance and true faith, are assured of the remission of their sins.

remain to trouble us. The scars are left though the wounds are healed. There are traces of the former darkness amid the radiance of the present light. The ground-swell continues after the Master has said to the upheaved waters, "Peace, be still." The soul still mourns over what God has forgiven, but what itself cannot forget. A chill and a shadow fall upon it from even the memory of past lapses and punishments. And as for the body, how often that carries with it to the grave the cuts and bruises, the aches and tribulations of vices long since forsaken and appetites long ago brought into captivity to Christ. These need sometimes all the comfort within our power to give, and God has not left his priests without direction how to give it.

Speaking under the dispensation of His grace, we are authorized to declare in all such cases that the consequences of repented and forgiven sin, however they may run on into after years, are not to be regarded as penal inflictions of Divine justice. What would have been punishment is translated by God's mercy into chastisement. The present pain is no longer the evidence of His wrath against sin, but is changed into the token of His love for the

ransomed and pardoned sinner. Whereas, before, every throb of anguish carried with it a corresponding pang of remorse, now it dies away into the healing balm of a discipline which purifies while it admonishes, and lifts the soul nearer heaven by the very burden which it carries. Thus peace is born of trouble, and rest issues from tumult and vexation, and so the Psalmist's words come true, "It is good for me that I have been troubled, that I may learn thy statutes."*

(5) But this question cannot be considered apart from a larger one with which we are often called to deal as ministers of consolation. There are those who have not been required to pass through the bitter experience of the openly wicked, the avowedly impure, whose lives have been soiled and stained by sins which only tears and agonies as well as God's mercy could wash away; and yet who are burdened and pained by consequences entailed upon them by the offences of others, whether living or dead. They have from the beginning striven for innocency of life, done justly, and walked humbly with God, and yet they bear with them, and will

* Psalm 119 : 71.

do so to the end, the deep furrows cut into soul and body by the vices of those gone before. Their suffering is not of their own creation. Their wills and consciences have had nothing to do with the causes of it. The child is stung and poisoned by the father's crime. Each generation runs its course and passes away, but not without drawing those that follow it into the lurid, blighting shadow cast into the future by its wrongs and corruptions. There is, there can be, no sharper trial of our faith in the justice, to say nothing of the love, of God, than that springing from this dreadful, often crushing, experience. Can it be true, cries the soul, out of the depth of its perplexity and from the midst of sufferings which it feels that it does not deserve, that I am to be broken on the wheel or cast into the furnace for another's sin? Can it be that a God of love obliges the innocent to bear the punishment of the guilty? Why all this inherited wreck and ruin, pain and tribulation, conflict and anarchy? How have these links been dropped in the chain of moral justice, or these clouds crept over the sun of righteousness? Has God forgotten, or is He powerless to do right, or has the world staggered

blindly, under some fatal blow, from its proper orbit? These and like cries for light and comfort rise every day from countless scenes of trial, from pain-pierced bodies and stricken hearts. Eyes wet with tears weep them, lips livid with grief repeat them, and the vexed and weary world, on all sides, takes up the sad refrain in audible sobs of anguish. Doubt, mystery, difficulty rise like walls of flint around this problem as it appears to unassisted nature. Faith gives the clue, which reason cannot, to its solution. The God of Revelation, speaking by the incarnate Christ, takes us by the hand and leads us out of the darkness. He assures us of certain things which we are to receive as facts, however difficult it may be to apply them to individual cases. He does not absolutely dispel the mystery of His government, but He kindles light enough to enable us to draw comfort from what we can understand and to be patient until what is hidden shall be cleared up.

(a) God is just and true in all His ways. He is a God of justice, because He is a God of love, and the two attributes, however they may seem to work apart or to antagonize, must be coincident and issue in harmony of action and result.

(b) This present life is only a beginning and a preparation. It is a school in which only the rudiments of knowledge are taught, and the elementary conditions and forms of discipline are enforced. The evil of to-day may become the good of the hereafter. The suffering that now seemeth grievous can be so inflicted and so borne as to be the seed-wheat of a harvest of happiness and glory beyond.

(c) All evil is traceable to fallen wills and all pain is the fruit of sin committed somewhere along the tortuous line of the will-power of the creature. In the distribution among individuals of the vast dividend representing the wages of sin, God has other ends to serve than that of judicial punishment. He admonishes and warns, corrects and amends, chastens and purifies, weans us from the world, and lifts us up to the plane of the powers of an endless life, teaches man the tremendous consequences of wickedness by the suffering it entails, and publishes His own holiness, as well by the chastisements of the good as by the punishments of the bad.

(d) No man liveth that sinneth not, and hence no man liveth who can positively affirm that there is no

ground of reason and justice in himself for the infliction of penalty. God sees life as it is ; man sees it only as it appears to his own more or less ignorant and always fallible judgment. When we say that such and such visitations are unmerited, that we are victims to others' faults and crimes, that we seem to be singled out especially as targets for the arrows of affliction, that our innocence, not less than others' guilt, invites the hailstones and coals of fire, it would be wise to pause and ask whether we are sure that we are so innocent, so meritorious, so blameless in thought, word, and deed, as to make it certain that we in no degree deserve what we get. God acts upon His own, not our knowledge and judgment ; He takes in the whole case, we never more than a part ; we compare ourselves with those who seem to be worse, He compares us with those whom He knows to be better ; we are always tempted to clip, bit by bit, from our responsibility, He holds it fast in its integrity. It may be true, that to serve God's purposes, which embrace the eternal as well as the temporal, we suffer more than we deserve, but it is never true that any and all suffering is absolutely unjust because absolutely un-

deserved. He alone can determine and apportion what belongs to us as penalty and what is needful to us merely as warning and correction ; and, if He be a righteous God, we must believe that He does it righteously.

(e) No temporal evil is simply and *de toto genere* a punishment. To make it so three things are required : *a*, That it be painful and grievous to suffer ; *b*, that it be inflicted for some fault ; *c*, that it be involuntary and against the sufferer's will. " That," says Bishop Sanderson,* " which has but the first of these three conditions may be called a kind of punishment ; but properly, that evil only is a punishment wherein the whole three conditions concur. Now, temporal evils, though they have the *first* two conditions, all of them being grievous to suffer, all of them being inflicted for sin, yet in the third condition they fail, because they are not involuntary simply, and perpetually, and *de suo genere* (to omit also a kind of failing also in the *second* condition ; not but that they are ever inflicted for some sin deserving them, but for that there are withal other *ends* or *reasons* for which they are in-

* Third Sermon, " Ad Populum."

flicted, and whereunto they are intended, *besides* and *above* the punishment of the offence). It may not be gainsaid, indeed, but these things are *involuntary* sometimes in the particular, and especially to some men, even the *least* of them ; but *simply* and *universally* such they are not ; since by some other men the *greatest* of them are willingly and cheerfully not only *suffered*, but *desired*. It must needs be some grief to the merchant to see his rich lading cast overboard, and to the patient to have an old festered sore scorched and singed ; so to the Christian to have God's correcting hand lie heavy upon him in some temporal affliction. The Apostle telleth us plainly, '*No affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous.*' But involuntary it is no more in him than those other things are in them. . . . The Christian, though these temporal evils somewhat trouble him, yet he is willing to them and cheerful under them, and he acknowledgeth God's *goodness* in them, and returneth Him *thanks* for them ; because he knoweth they are sent for his future *good*, and that they will at the last '*yield him the peaceable fruit of righteousness,*' when he shall have been sufficiently *exer-*

cised thereby. See Peter and John rejoicing when they suffered for the name of Jesus, and St. Paul so far from fearing, that he longed after his dissolution ; and the blessed martyrs running to a fagot as to a feast. Verily, God's children see great good in these things, which others account evils, and therefore they take them not as bare punishments sent to afflict them, but as glorious trials to exercise them, as gracious corrections to humble them, as precious receipts to purge and restore and strengthen them."

And still farther, touching the difficult question raised by the second commandment, " There is no question *de facto*, but so it is, the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children ; but *de jure*, with what right and equity are they so visited ? *First*, the punishments inflicted are temporal and outward, not spiritual and eternal ; *secondly*, when they are inflicted *de jure*, it is because the children tread in their father's steps and continue in their sins, being drawn thereto by nature, example, and education ; *thirdly*, the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children sometimes as possessors of something which their fathers left them, with

God's curse cleaving unto it. Finally, when the children are punished for the father's sins, or indefinitely any one man for the sins of any other man, it ought to be imputed to those sins of the fathers or others, not as the *causes* properly *deserving* them, but only as *occasioning* those punishments."

Dr. Mozley has brought out with great clearness and unanswerable logic the two sides of the second commandment—the one *judicial*, the other *didactic*; the one a "ruling idea in early ages," the other the result of a clearer insight into God's natural providence; the one implicating the children in their father's guilt and punishing them for it, the other affirming that the sins of the fathers are the *occasion*, as Bishop Sanderson puts it, of misfortune to the children, but denying that, in the literal sense, the misfortune is *merited* by the children on account of those sins. The latter view did not wait for the Gospel, working through a more enlightened moral sense, to enforce it. No writer of to-day could put it more strongly than did the Prophet Ezekiel.* As Canon Mozley says: "As

* Ezekiel 18 : 2.

the law of Sinai worked in men's minds, it gradually developed the deeper parts of his moral nature, and the individuality of the human being came out in its true form and with its true moral consequences. The law of the second commandment proves to be a law of God's natural providence, but no judicial law. We recite it in our churches now, but we take it in a sense which satisfies the terms of it, viz., the physical consequences, which, while they do not prove desert, still answer important didactic purposes. . . . Its law of visitation of sins is regarded as sufficiently fulfilled if God does so connect, *i.e.*, as cause and effect, sin with misery for *any* wise purpose—any purpose which is instructive, though not implying anything judicial. . . . The course of things in this world is a great teacher. And among the modes of teaching, one is the sight of the ruinous effects of men's sins upon the condition of their families and posterity. The sin is thus held up to the world with a mark upon it, it is made to fasten on men's eyes, and it is kept up in recollection when otherwise it might be forgotten. Providence, if we may use the expression, cannot afford to dispense with

the ordinary weapons of instruction which chain the attention of mankind to the consequences of sin, thus putting the stamp of evil upon it, exhibiting it to the world in a fearful and formidable light, and converting it into a lasting spectacle of disaster and sadness before men's eyes. The fact that sin continues in its effects long after the act itself is didactic and creates a deep image in men's minds."*

(6) But all this is only part of the general subject, and we cannot leave it without passing out into a wider circle of thought. Good men are grieved and perplexed not only because of God's mysterious method of working out the punishment and suffering of sin among their posterities, but still more, if possible, by that order of the world which allows the wicked to prosper and the righteous to be afflicted, despoiled, and trodden down. From the lips of what holy man has not the cry gone up at sundry times, "How long shall the wicked triumph?" How long shall evil have the upper hand and apparently rule the world? How long will it be true that "God shall order a good man's going and make his way acceptable to himself," yet permit

* Mozley's "Ruling Ideas," pp. 114-118.

the same good man to live in the shadow and be cursed by the boastful pride and insolent contempt of the bad man? How long shall impiety be rewarded and godliness be at a discount?

“It was a stumbling-block to the heathen to see good men oppressed and vice prosper; it made them doubt, some whether there be a God or no; others, nothing better, whether a providence or no. But what marvel if they stumbled who had no right knowledge either of God or of His providence, when Job, and David, and other dear children of God have been much puzzled with it. David confesseth in Psalm 73 that *His feet had well-nigh slipped* when he saw the prosperity of the wicked; and certainly down he had been, had he not happily stepped ‘*into the sanctuary of God, and there understood the end of these men.*’”* It was true that he opened the 37th Psalm with the exhortation, “*Fret not thyself because of the ungodly, neither be thou envious against the evil-doers;*” and yet in the 73d he tells us *how he was grieved* “*because they come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men.*” “*While*

* Bishop Sanderson, Sermons, p. 217.

all the day long have I been punished, and chastened every morning.

David's feeling was natural and irrepressible ; and this feeling is as much so now as when he wrote these words. It sways us more or less at all times ; and when things go wrong about us, and our plans are brought to naught, or when we are smarting under injustice or adversity—the arrows of contrary fortune sticking fast in us—it becomes a fruitful source of disturbing tempers in the soul and even of rash and wayward acts in external conduct. Some minds are so affected by it as, when the shadows lie heavy upon them, to be led off, first, into doubt, then into despair, and finally into a passive, fatalistic acquiescence in what cannot be helped, thus converting life into a riddle which cannot be solved or into a burden to be borne hopelessly to the end. Others, again, are simply soured and exasperated by it, drifting away gradually into the moods of hate and retaliation, or, wearying of these, into a settled melancholy that contents itself with a sentimental brooding over what there is no longer strength or inclination to resist. Minds of either sort are peculiarly open to the more subtle objections to Chris-

tianity, as urged by the philosophical sentimentalism or philosophical scepticism of the time. Neither theory may have any relief to offer, but their purpose will be answered, if they can persuade such persons to believe that what they fail to do cannot be done by the Christian religion. As well, then, for the sake of the sympathy and comfort craved by minds so troubled, as for the sake of rescuing them from divers temptations, assailing them from the stand-point of free thought on the problems of human life and the world's vexed order, should the pastorate do all within its power to give them what they need. Christianity is here to console men under their troubles, as well as to enlighten them upon the origin and end of those troubles. It has consolation to offer on this subject, and we should make it our duty to show men how to find it. This is no easy task. The higher class of minds to be dealt with will not be put off with stereotyped exhortations to patience and resignation, or with the platitudes of a wordy sympathy. The matters that perplex and distress them are facts—stern, gloomy, depressing facts; and explanations and assurances, if attempted, must rest on solid ground

and address reason and conscience as well as faith. When a soul is full of unrest, a very fever raging in the blood, it is idle to say, "Be quiet," unless you have a remedy at hand that will help it to be so.

Now, it is not to be disguised that only wide and deep and most earnest and thoughtful studies of the *genius*, not less than the *mission* of Christianity, can qualify any guide of souls to do this kind of work successfully. Many a one has gone through the customary curriculum in theology, and yet found himself, when tried, a mere child in this business, and for the reason, in part, that he has given his time and labor to the formulated doctrines rather than to the ethical spirit of the faith. The doctrines present God as an object of contemplation—as He is in His being and attributes, His registered decrees and methods; the ethics oblige us to watch as well as to think of Him standing out, as it were, from the background of eternity as the personal Governor of the universe, moving upon and moving through created and yet free wills, directing events in history, presiding over the life-plan of every human being, holding in His hand every thread in the tangled web of earthly affairs,

and in every soul the scales of truth and falsehood, right and wrong. If Christianity may be said to have any philosophy, that philosophy must be at our command unless we would prove ourselves such counsellors and comforters as gathered around Job in the time of his agony—their arguments, their consolations serving only to darken the mystery and to enhance the pain of his afflictions.

But it may be asked by some who have had no actual experience in the matter, and only such will ask the question, why should it be difficult to deal with such cases? What sort of Christian is that who neither holds, nor can find the clue to lead him out of the dark labyrinth? What else has he to do, when borne down, or cornered, or pierced and lacerated by the world's disorder and injustice, than to fall back on the truths which he professes to hold? It is one thing for the surgeon to look at his instruments lying bright and keen in their case, and another thing to use them as they were meant to be used on the bleeding, fractured, groaning patient. It is one thing to manœuvre an army on parade day, and another thing to do it on the battle-field amid the thunder and carnage of an enemy's guns. So

far as life's troubles go, we are all good enough Christians until the troubles are actually upon us. Some truths, and very precious ones, we have seen dimly ; some have been floating in brain and heart for years, perhaps, only as solemn phrases, not as solemn realities ; others, after keeping for a while at the forefront of our thoughts, have dropped away in sleepy vagueness, as the bright vapors of the sunset drop below the evening horizon—not utterly vanished or dissolved, but no longer quite visible. And so it often happens that they, who apparently know the most *about* their faith, turn up weakest *in* their faith when the bitter waters of adversity are let loose upon them. Our task is to bring believers to act under trial as though they really did believe, to help them to see clearly and to apply firmly to a present grievance, an overwhelming sorrow, a cruel injustice, a dark wrong to themselves or to others, the faith which, as a creed, they have been reciting, and it may be teaching, for half their lives. To adduce and examine in detail all the helps offered us by Christianity, for the effective performance of this task, would carry me beyond the limits marked out by me in the treatment of this subject. It is

enough, perhaps, that I dwell briefly upon the salient points, leaving the rest to be inferred.

(1) It has been the habit of the morbid schools of poetry and philosophy to take it for granted that the Holy Scriptures could really teach them very little, if anything, touching that side of the world's life from which the evils and wrongs and sufferings of mankind emanate. They declare that the Sacred Writings give no proper answer to their vehement protests and indignant expostulations against the wreck and disorder and pain produced by the moral constitution of this world. They rail against it as a hopeless enigma ; they attack it or retreat from it as a scheme of blank fatalism that grinds on with pitiless persistency, reducing the so-called liberty of human wills to a mockery and a sham ; they draw out gloom and death from every part and recess of the scheme, and then and there parade as an object of pity the diseased sensibility begotten of their own lop-sided conceptions and angry dissents. A very moderate acquaintance with modern literature renders needless any citation of particular examples to prove this. The Byrons and Shelleys of the last generation have their counterparts to-day,

though not quite so sardonic and bitterly passionate as they.

Now, while it is a weakness in any Christian believer to be influenced in such a matter by such men, it is nevertheless true that many believers are, and some of them deeply. They allow what they have learned outside the pale of God's truth to shape more or less their feeling and thinking inside of it.

It is of consequence, then, to show, to begin with, how profoundly, nay, exhaustively, the Word of God, as elsewhere, so especially in the Book of Job, has grappled with, turned over and over under every possible side-light, our human sense of the injustice of this visible order of things, neither denying nor evading anything that can be truly said about it. The Bible handles it as one of the earliest of man's experiences. It did so far back in the ages long before Greek or Latin thought took up the dark parable, and did it so thoroughly that all modern handling, however stimulated by rasher speculations, or by great passions set on fire by the gigantic evils incident to shaken empires, colliding civilizations, and vast social convulsions at the close

of the last and the opening of the present century, has added nothing new. Whatever the difficulty, it was as well known and as deeply looked into by the old patriarch of Idumea as by the Shakespeares and Goethes of European thought. "It would seem almost as if it were the intention of Scripture to show to all generations of mankind how thoroughly it understood this vein of thought, and, however watchful over it, felt with it; and how it was resolved to leave no excuse to the most sensitive to say that their case had been overlooked and unprovided for. One look into this book (Job) should satisfy the most vehement, indignant, melancholy natures of the existence of a religion which understands them, and would direct them if they would let it. Scripture is beforehand with its sympathy, anticipates them perfectly, reflects their keenest thoughts."

It is certain, then, that a hand from without has been stretched forth to lead us through the mazes of an evil world, dark and tangled as they are, that we are not left to our own conjectures and imaginings, nor even to our own moral or intellectual reasoning, nor yet to the fallible judgments of the tra-

ditions and speculations of mankind at large. A light is burning at the heart of the mystery, and that light is the Word of Him who permits the mystery and at the same time declares that it shall work out an exceeding and eternal weight of glory to all who love and trust Him.

(2) We now and then meet with a high-wrought religion, a lofty, self-abnegating piety—which, in its anxiety to vindicate the ways of God, as those ways appear in the constitution and order of the world, is disposed to question the integrity and purity of the sense of justice in human nature and to range under the head of distortions and exaggerations of fact much of the wrong which the average man believes that he sees in the government of the world. Unable to account for, or entirely to justify things as they are, it takes refuge in imputations on those instincts of justice in the soul which are as truly the ordinance of God as is the order of things of which they take cognizance—which is quite as wise as it would be to try to disperse the darkness by putting out the eye that goes up and down searching for the light. In lieu of any such slight put on our sense of justice, let every guide of souls insist

rather upon its worth and power. However it may go astray, in this or that particular, it is, after all, the unsilenced and unsilenceable prophecy and affirmation in man of the perfect righteousness which God has pledged Himself to establish somewhere in the coming future. It is more, too, than an attribute or function of the moral reason. It not only sees and judges, rebukes and condemns, but often glows, as with the fire of a sacred passion, under the verdicts which itself pronounces or believes others ought to pronounce. It yearns to see the balance struck and right and wrong, wherever they prevail, get their due. It does vastly more than express, or, under challenge and doubt, bear witness to, our human conception of right and wrong. For not seldom it happens, amid those solemn crises in history, when the race, no longer willing to bear the yoke imposed by bad rulers, or the corruptions rolled up out of the unhealthy accretions of the past, turns over like a giant in a fever—rending and crushing everything in its way—that, then, this faculty, sentiment, instinct—call it what you will—rises to the grandeur and wields the power of an almost divine enthusiasm. “Such is

that passion for justice which, sometimes lofty, sometimes trivial in its subject-matter, sometimes fearful and vehement, sometimes meek and patient, according to individual character, lives on in the minds of men, expecting some day its final rest and fulfilment, and ever pressing toward it. Scripture appeals to it throughout, and represents the world, with that whole course of events which forms its history, and all the exhibition of character which has taken place in it, as tending like some drama, or some trial, to a great judicial issue at the day of judgment."

But in marking out the sphere and setting forth the rightful office of this sentiment, we must be careful to insist upon the distinction so clearly stated in Bishop Butler's Analogy. In treating of the moral reason, of which this feeling is a constituent part, he allows it to judge of morality, but not of expediency; that is (to apply the principle to the case in hand), to pass upon the justice or injustice of the world's order as we see it, but not upon the construction of the whole system, which covers eternity as well as time. In other words, it may and it is bound to judge of the present fact of

evil and misery as the result of that system in time. "But it is not competent to take in the whole of it in itself, or in its ultimate consequences, and therefore not competent to criticise it as a whole." Otherwise, it might claim, "That all creatures should at first be made as perfect and as happy as they were capable of ever being, and that nothing of hazard or danger should be put upon them." But to demand this would be to demand the utter abrogation of all moral probation, with its liberty and risk, *i. e.*, the repeal of that constitution of the moral world which God, in His perfect wisdom, has seen fit to establish. While it is true, then, that man may judge *moral facts* as they occur, it is also true that he cannot determine what is for the best in the long run.

(3) Now, alongside the fact that this love of justice is an essential part of human nature, is the twin fact that the world, at many points and on the most serious matters, crosses and annoys that love, now and then baffles it, tramples upon it, utterly crushes it. So often, indeed, does this happen that some, in their despair and anguish, are led to believe that wrong is the rule and right the exception, and so that the world's order has been framed in the interest of

injustice. Now, leaving out of view what the next world will have to say about it, it is for us to do what we can to save souls from so gloomy and distressing a creed of evil, by showing them that, bad as things are, the system of this world, on the whole, favors the good as regards happiness and satisfaction in life, tends to eliminate wickedness and promote righteousness, and gives ample proof that all, or even the greater part, of the vindications of truth, justice, and purity are not reserved for the world to come. Evil no sooner starts in its career than retribution fastens upon it. The will of man no sooner signs a covenant with hell than remorse—one form of retribution—begins to gnaw at its core. Sin is no sooner committed than it begins to give the sinner notice that it will find him out. The wicked, beneath what seems the untroubled surface of their lives, carry a curse in their bones and a plague in the marrow thereof. Human language is full of maxims and instances resting on man's instinctive conviction that every wrong has its avenger. Even the Psalmist, whose "treadings had well-nigh slipped," because he saw "the ungodly in such prosperity," admits that the time came

when he saw "the end of these men." This side of the world's drift is touched by the great poet of human nature with his wonted power :

" Innocent blood,
E'en like the blood of Abel,
Cries from the tongueless caverns of the earth
For justice and rough chastisement."

But the law of retribution applies as certainly and universally to the good as to the bad. It is obscured by many false lights and many plausible counter-facts, but it asserts itself and comes more clearly to the surface as our observation deepens, and so enables us to disengage it from misleading considerations.

God has armed all virtue with an astonishing resiliency toward its proper orbit. Sooner or later it cleaves its way through the incumbent darkness, and starting from its own bright centre travels up into the noonday light. It is only a misreading and perversion of history that sees

" Right forever on the scaffold—wrong forever on the throne."

Even that modern school that can find no place in the world for the personality of a righteous God

is obliged to admit that the world's constitution exhibits, as its profoundest and surest law, a certain all-embracing "tendency to righteousness."

(4) But suppose the facts were otherwise, suppose good and evil, justice and injustice, were, for the present, locked in a sort of death-struggle—the course of this world affording little or no indication as to the side on which victory would finally settle—it ought not very seriously to disturb the man of faith. His comfort is that his faith obliges him to concern himself, in the last resort, only with the right of God's administration upon the whole and eternally; that faith cannot be overturned by what happens here, because its eyes are fixed definitely upon the hereafter. To it this world is only the fragment of a larger system, the most of which is now invisible. What is wrong in the smaller parts will be rectified in the greater. To a balanced Christian what occasion is there for vehemence and excitement? There is no danger; all is safe; a good ultimate issue is sure and has only to be waited for. There are believers who find no comfort in their Christianity because they have a nervous dread lest somehow God will totter to His fall

and His magistracy break up and go to pieces under the assaults of evil. They are excited at the first news of any case of injustice and oppression, and they clamor for punishment on the spot, as if they doubted that punishment would come at all if it did not come now and as the lightnings strike. But such is not the true temper with respect to what ourselves or others suffer. We can afford to be calm and self-possessed though the round world be shaken by the powers of darkness, because we are sure of the issue. Says another: "Rational justice is a sober and tempered feeling, allowing time, preparation, and trial; introducing its operations with preliminaries, conducting them by rule, and consummating them with gravity. And Christian justice is—more than sober and tempered—passive and self-denying. Now, Christian justice assumes its most majestic temper, and feels the strength and repose which mathematical science and logic do in their respective spheres; a strength and a repose arising from clear-sightedness—the certainty that, as the problem must produce its demonstration, the argument its conclusion, so a moral constitution of things must issue in a day of judgment. Acting.

in the highest stage of character, and become a quality not of a simply *feeling*, or of a simply *rational*, but of a *spiritual* nature, it imitates the temper of Him who, seated high above this world and all its movements, and strong in His own omnipotence, is supreme in His hatred and supreme also in His toleration of evil: "Who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

Verily, amid the tumult, vexation, doubt, and sorrow arising from this visible, present order of things, God has committed to us His ordained servants a ministry of consolation not less than a ministry of reconciliation. And the fact that He has done so is not more sure than the fact that goes with it, viz., that in the new dispensation of His love—even the Gospel of Jesus Christ—He has given us all grace and truth necessary to make it the noblest of powers, the greatest of blessings.

(V.) I come now to a branch of the subject involv-

ing more difficulties and imposing a heavier task upon the guide of souls than any other. If our people felt free to approach the clergy, and to open up to them frankly and fully their hidden troubles, there would be general astonishment at the revelation that would be made, both as to the depth and seriousness of the tendency to doubt, and as to the number of minds more or less under its influence. The common atmosphere is full of it. It is at work in individual hearts, producing restlessness and anxiety. It crops out alarmingly in our homes, showing itself in the questions asked by the young—questions suggested by their companions or brought away from the Sunday-school—questions started, but not answered, in the pulpit. It creeps stealthily, silently through our parishes. It speaks more freely in shops and counting-rooms and places of popular resort. It impinges not merely on the outworks, but on the citadel of the faith itself. It does not formally examine, or analyze, or argue; but still in a very practical way it courts, not declines, contact with issues which it has not learning or logic enough, far less faith enough, to settle; and yet which it deals with just enough to catch

the infection of secret distrust. In our congregations we know not how many there are, who quietly discount much that the preacher says, throwing aside this or that utterance, as though it were simply a professional dictum which consistency obliged him to pronounce, or a stray fragment of the Christian tradition, which had passed for truth only because no one had challenged it. While the preacher is appealing to the authority of the Scriptures, there are scores in the pews who are asking : How about the genuineness of the Gospels ? How about the moral difficulties in the Old Testament, and the discrepancies of texts and facts in the New ? While he is taking for granted the divine origin and organization of the Church, they are revolving the doubt as to whether, after all, it be anything more than a long-perpetuated and highly-dignified voluntary society. While he is laboring to bring his hearers up to higher views of Sacramental grace, there will be a goodly minority busy at the question whether it is possible that God could, or, likely that He would convey supernatural influence through water, and bread and wine, or by the laying on of hands. And, observe, I am not alluding to a class who are intentionally

captious, who are inclined to doubt because of the pleasurable intellectual friction which it excites, or because of the excuse it would afford for continuing in an irreligious habit of mind or in the open neglect of duty. On the contrary, I am referring to minds who honestly desire to hold the truth, and are ready to accept its consequences whether theoretical or practical—baptized, and confirmed, or even communing members of the Church, who have been reared in its bosom, instructed in its ways, and who are attached to its worship and its history. There are many such who need a sort of counsel which they do not get, and crave a special individual care and direction which not a few parish priests have neither the training nor the ability, and, consequently, not the inclination, to give. And, for the want of them, there are lives among us that, amid the surging cross-currents of modern thought, are slowly, silently, but surely ravelling out and crumbling to pieces beneath the shadows of our Church spires, nay, amid the very pomp of our ceremonial and within the sound of our preaching. It is, indeed, high time that parish ministers should arouse from their lethargy on this side of their work, and

give more of their thought and effort to the task of stopping these leaks in our ecclesiastical cisterns, mending these hidden breaches in our walls of defence.*

There are doubters that do not fall within the scope of the present inquiry. There is the absolute 'sceptic, who, if he has not lost faith in the existence of all obligatory truth, has lost it in all the customary methods and instrumentalities for discovering it. He distrusts his own reason, his own moral intuitions, because of their occasional fallibility. He distrusts the evidences that are offered because they are not free from difficulty, or because they leave behind them unanswered objections. With such, be he deist, pantheist, atheist, or what

* Dean Alford, in his "Essays" (p. 147), says, speaking of the condition of things on this subject in the Church of England: "Our present training is very defective, and inability to guide men who are, if not troubled, at least deeply affected by the opposing blasts of doctrine on a thousand matters, is very general on the part of our ministry."

Mr. Froude, in more than one place in his "Short Essays on Great Subjects," affirms the same, though in much stronger, and even in contemptuous terms.

It is to be feared that *we* have not much reason to ask for any modification of the Dean's language.

not, we have no concern in the urgency now under consideration. So with the frivolous, light-hearted sceptic who has given up sober thought for a laugh or a sneer, and who finds a certain compensation for the anarchy in his own mind by denying or ridiculing the beliefs around him. As another has well said: "When I hear some youth telling me with a simpering face that he does not *know* or pretend to *say* whether there be a God or not; or whether, if there be, He takes any interest in human affairs, or whether if he does, it much concerns us to know, or whether, if He has revealed that knowledge, it is possible or impossible for us to ascertain it; when I hear him further saying, that meantime he is disposed to make himself very easy in the midst of these uncertainties, and await the great revelation of the future with philosophical, that is, being interpreted, with idiotic, tranquillity, I see that in point of fact, he has never entered into the question, that he has failed to realize the terrible moment of the questions (however decided) of which he speaks with such amazing flippancy."

Such a mind has no idea of what thinking is, or it wishes to get rid of disquieting truths, or it has sur-

rendered itself to a foolish craving for paradox, or perhaps, other excitement failing, it ventilates its follies with the amiable desire to stir up and frighten "mammās and maiden aunts and timid parsons." There is no occasion for prescribing any special handling of such cases. They should be treated just as we always treat childish levity and folly when exhibited in grave matters. Unfortunately, what has been attributed to "the simpering youth" sometimes shows itself in grown-up men of some intellectual pretension. When it does, the flippancy is only all the more childish and deserves to be met with an indignant rebuke.*

But this class of doubters is quite outside our province, and I have alluded to them only in a passing way. Our thought is turned to a very dif-

* The doubter of this kind reminds us of what Fuller says : "He keeps a register of many difficult places in Scripture ; not that he desires satisfaction therein, but delights to puzzle divines therewith ; and counts it a great conquest when he hath posed them. Unnecessary questions out of the Bible are his most necessary study ; and he is more curious to know where Lazarus's soul was the four days he lay in the grave than careful to provide for his own soul when he shall be dead."

ferent character—one on which we cannot well bestow too much attention and sympathy—the mind that doubts because it cannot help it, and is sad and wretched because it doubts. Such a mind will cherish the hope that it may be mistaken, will rejoice to be answered and confuted, will keep back its convictions as if they were a guilty secret, will utter them only as the cry of an agonized heart, will shrink from imparting them to others as though they involved the danger of a contagion. There are minds among us that enter into the feeling that Pascal expressed when addressing the light-hearted sceptic: “Is this, then, a thing to be said with gayety? Is it not rather a thing to be said with tears, as the saddest thing in the world.”* They have not lost their hold on God; they have not

* In “The New Republic” (page 359), this sad, serious view of doubt is strongly put by one of the characters:

“Once I could pray every morning and go forth to my day’s labor stayed and comforted. But now I can pray no longer. You have taken my God away from me, and I know not where you have laid him. My only consolation in my misery is that I am at least inconsolable for his loss. Though you have made me miserable, I am not yet content with my misery; and there is one folly that I will not give tongue to. I will not say, peace, peace, when there is no peace.”

drifted away from faith in Christ ; they have not formally broken with any of the fundamentals of Christianity ; but, like a vessel moored in a harbor, yet dragging its anchor, with the open sea surging just outside, they are drifting slowly into the storm and toward the shipwreck of their beliefs and hopes.

Now, with such, the sources, the forms, the degrees of doubt are various. One doubts because his mental temperament inclines him to do so, another because of an unsettled will and a hidden moral obliquity, another because of his line of reading or the influences of irreligious associates. There are doubts which are rooted and doubts which are only provisional, *i.e.*, entertained as necessary preliminaries to inquiry and reflection. There are moral doubts, arising from the darkening of God's face in the time of trouble and calamity ; doubts as to His love, wisdom, and justice, springing from the harsh inequalities of human lot and from what seems like favoritism in the divine dealings. And then there is that restless, numerous brood warmed into activity by the conflict with the Christian traditions which has been engendered by the progress of physical knowledge—doubts as to the reality of Christianity

as a whole, doubts as to the reality of this or that part of it, *e.g.*, the derivation and authority of the Priesthood, the efficacy of the Sacraments, the expiatory character of the sacrifice of Christ, the duration of future punishment, the nature of the Church, whether it was organized, equipped, and officered by its Head, or whether all this was left to the shifting circumstances and tastes of each generation—whether our religion began as an idea, an influence, or as a visible kingdom, with its essential order, as well as its essential faith, established for all the ages to come.

Thus far I have endeavored to state the case in outline and somewhat in detail ; and now I turn to consider the practical questions growing out of the relations to it of the cure of souls. It is taken for granted that, while lectures and discourses addressed to assemblies and dealing with men in bulk may accomplish much good, in most instances of real difficulty, the only effectual treatment must be individual and private. Now, what are we to do ? what must be the special training to qualify us for these hand-to-hand conflicts with minds thus beset and thus troubled coming to us for help ? No one

will feel more deeply than I how far short of the requirements of this grave and delicate duty my suggestions will fall. If they have any merit, it will be found in the honest recognition of the difficulty and the want, and in the equally honest attempt to find a remedy for both.

It is not my purpose to consider this or that specific doubt or objection, but rather aspects and bearings of the sceptical drift cropping out here and there, in minds which have taken upon themselves the *sacramentum* of faith and obedience, and to indicate some lines of study and modes of treatment by which it may be met.

(1) As a necessary part of our preparation for this task we should enter upon a careful and comprehensive study of the history of modern doubt, as also of the history of modern Apologetics. The elements of Christian evidence are always the same, but their combination and arrangement in every age depend upon the points of attack and the new weapons employed by the shifting tactics of unbelief. The history of the evidences is divisible into four chapters :*

* *Vide* Farrar's "Critical History of Free Thought," p. 452.

(1) That embracing the conflict of Christianity with Judaism and Paganism.

(2) That embracing the contest with the various forms of free thought in the Middle Ages.

(3) That developed by the unbelief of the Renaissance.

(4) That including the struggle against the Deism of England, the Atheism of France, and the Rationalism of Germany—the three issuing in that huge and stormy amalgam of doubt and denial which, in our day, exhibits itself in all the aspects of opposition, lying between a bald naturalistic positivism on the one hand, and a spongy eclecticism on the other. Positivism denies the *possibility* of revelation; the instinctive, intuitional, spiritualistic philosophy denies its *necessity*; while the various eclectic schools *accept only such parts of it* as chance to square with their own fluctuating standards. The positivist, pushing to its logical result the intellectual and sensational method of the old Deistic school of the eighteenth century, affirms that all outside the sphere of the senses and the understanding is unthinkable and unknowable. The intuitionalist declares that the only possible revela-

tion is that which God has written upon the tablet of the human soul. The eclecticist admits the fact of a book-revelation, but rejects such parts of it as happen to disagree with his own self-created standard of judgment. To these must be added the scientist, who discredits revelation wholly or partially, because of its asserted contradiction of certain alleged results of modern discovery. I simply state the best known, the most respectable, as well as the most formidable, phases of existing unbelief. I make no attempt to run them out into particulars or to develop their characteristic bearings. I am only insisting that every guide of souls shall thoroughly understand the assailants of the faith which he is commissioned to defend, and also keep well in hand the means of defense which the best Christian learning of the day has supplied. He is not, observe, expected to deal with avowed unbelievers, but with those of his flock whose minds and hearts are clouded and vexed by difficulties which themselves cannot answer, and yet which, if not answered, will sooner or later weaken and perhaps shatter their faith. Seldom will the theories of unbelief above-named be found lurking *as theories*

in the minds of the faithful. It is rather the atmosphere generated by them, and insensibly interfused through the lungs of the popular faith, that will chiefly confront us. This is something which cannot be met by processes of argument, or by formal arrays of evidence. The enemy is not one of flesh and blood, with a local habitation and a name ; but a temper of mind, a drift of feeling, a veiled distrust, a suspicion that gradually comes to the front.

To meet these we must build up on the opposite side. The currents of thought must be turned into healthier channels. The mind's hold on the truth must be strengthened and the atmosphere it breathes must be purified. Scatter the mist by letting in the light. Plant ladders in the dark places, up which the troubled soul may climb, until it feels the warmth and beholds the radiance of the sun.

In dealing with avowed unbelief, the best Christian apologists in all ages have relied sometimes upon the philosophy, and sometimes upon the facts of the Gospel. Either or both lines may still be followed when necessary, but the first thing to be done in the cases now under review is to check, or expel one temper or tendency by in-

roducing another and sounder one. In doing this the following considerations will be of great value.

(1) *Responsibility for opinions and beliefs.*

There has arisen of late a perilous levity of temper in dealing with questions that most profoundly affect the present condition and future destiny of the soul. In the general upheaval of the time, multitudes have come to feel that there is little, if any, responsibility attaching to what a man believes or disbelieves ; that opinions may be embraced or set aside very much as we put on or off our clothing, according to the shifting caprices of fashion ; that a true faith and a true life are not inseparable ; and that while accountable for the life, we are quite at liberty to do as we please about the faith or no faith which we profess. It is impossible to exaggerate the vicious influence of this fallacy.

It is said that we are bound to accept the current Christian morality because in regard to that there is an almost universal agreement ; but that there is no such obligation in regard to any system of faith or teaching, and this, for the reason that all Christian doctrines offered for our acceptance are more or less doubted or denied ; that they are in fact all

resolvable into matters of opinion, concerning which the widest freedom of criticism and dissent must be allowed. The inference from this is that while a man is responsible for his moral code, he need not be so for his religious beliefs. Now, to this it may be truly answered that the faith of Christianity is the root and ground of Christian morality. We may, indeed, differ on many unessential things included in the vast circle of Christian teaching, and yet not disturb the foundations of Christian morals ; but it is impossible to reject the fundamentals of that teaching and retain, for any length of time, the morality which is part of its vital breath. It often happens that a man keeps himself morally healthy by habitually breathing the atmosphere created by the truth, while he stands apart from the truth itself. This may be true of an individual, but not of a generation. It is an anomaly which soon corrects itself.

The acceptance or rejection of the truth is simply one mode of exercising our liberty of choice. Every man's will has as much to do with his attitude toward spiritual truth as his reason, his wishes as his arguments, the state of his affections as the

evidence that may be offered to him. There never was a greater mistake than to suppose that most men's belief is determined by the amount of evidence advanced or by logical reasoning. A power stronger than either lies back of both—the condition of the mind itself—its bias—its sympathies and antipathies—its desires and prejudices. How often do we see persons believing or denying without evidence, or in the teeth of evidence! How often does the most cogent argument split upon the underlying rock of an averted will, or burn up and dissolve in the flame of aroused passion! How differently do different minds interpret the same facts! The force of proof depends upon the degree in which it helps or hinders the dominant wish, the ruling purpose, of the mind to which it is addressed. Said our Lord: "This is the condemnation, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light [and why?] because their deeds were evil." (St. John 3 : 19.) He declares that there are two states of mind. In the one we love the darkness because it favors the vanities, the errors, the wickednesses to which we are inclined. In the other we prefer the light because it leads us toward

what is purest and best. For both states, however they may have been produced, we are, in the last resort, responsible. And if we carefully examine the Scriptures, we shall find that they do not deal so much with wrong opinions, with particular errors in belief, as with the moral bias—the general condition of mind and heart—which inclines us to them and gives them their hold upon us. They take it for granted that every mind to whom the Word of truth is offered is under a moral obligation to accept it; and they also take it for granted that if we reject it, it is because of a hostile temper of heart for which we are accountable. It is idle for any man to say that he *cannot* believe in Christ. For, if he cannot, his very inability is of the essence of his sin. This clearly is the teaching of Revelation. The will has nothing to do with demonstrative truths. If a man rejects them he is said to be an idiot, not a transgressor. But spiritual truth, “the truth as it is in Jesus,” stands on different ground. The intellect has far less to do with it than the heart. Hence the denial of it impeaches a man’s heart rather than his brain. A man may be mentally bright and morally bad. He may not be faulted

because he has a dull mind, nor praised because he has a keen one ; but he must be faulted if he have a bad heart, and, consequently, for what a bad heart rejects. We are told that a man must believe as he thinks, that he cannot help the result of his thinking, that he must follow the lead of the arguments presented to him, that if he reasons, he has no more control over the conclusions to which his reasoning may bring him than a printing machine has over the impressions made by its types. "But," as has been well said, "the living mind does not so act. If it cannot control the impressions made by the types when once set up, it has, at least, a great deal to do with setting them up."

On the other hand, let me not omit considerations which may modify, though they cannot altogether destroy, this responsibility for opinions and beliefs. There are the discipline and training of early years—the influence of the school, the society in which we have been reared and in the choice of which we had and could have no part. There are the bands and fences of circumstances which we did not create, and which we cannot entirely control. There is the power over us of learning, logic, and

eloquence, wielded in defence, it may be, of the wrong side, of facts partially stated, or evidence twisted out of its proper place and relations, of personal character commanding our confidence and yet arrayed against the truth. Again, the ages are not the same in their influence over us. One will be an age of faith, another an age of doubt ; one will be quiet, another restless ; one will affirm and construct, another will deny and destroy. There is an ebb and there is a flow, an advance and retreat, an action and reaction, in the opinions and beliefs of men, whose origin is as mysterious as their effects are subtle and powerful. From these no mind, however cautious and self-poised, can entirely dissociate itself. We are flavored by what we feed upon, and our food is more or less in the keeping of the time in which we live. And yet after all due allowance is made for the operation of these causes, the fact remains, that every man who stands in the light, and has the opportunity and the means to know the truth, is accountable for his mental and moral attitude toward the great issues which confront him. If we scuttle the ark built for our safety, we have only ourselves to blame if we sink in the troubled waters.

Much more remains to be said on this point, but it was my purpose to say no more than would serve to bring it distinctly before you as a thing to be urged very strongly upon those who come to you for counsel and direction respecting their doubts. Most persons would doubt less easily if they had a due sense of their responsibility in matters of religious opinion and faith. Certainly, they would be more cautious in taking up new theories, and more reluctant in surrendering what they have been taught to believe. There would be some hope of persuading them that "they have duties toward old truths as well as toward new ones"; that, to say the least, the claim upon them of many of the plausible and pretentious ventures of modern thought, liable to be upset and swept away by some single fact not unlikely to be discovered any day, is no stronger than the claim upon their faith and obedience of what was said and done in Judea more than eighteen hundred years ago.

(2) *A settled and definite mode of dealing with that problem of all problems—the origin and existence of evil in a universe created and governed by a God of infinite power, wisdom, and love.* I shall

not repeat here the history of man's questionings and speculations and failures on this subject ; nor dwell on its strange, and yet obvious fascination for the human mind, at every stage and under every phase of its development. On these points there is easy access for all to abundant sources of information. But even though I forbear to touch upon these, I may be thought by some to have wandered away needlessly into a field of inquiry quite remote from the strictly practical aim of these counsels to those charged with the cure of souls. There are cases in which the practical can be safely and truly reached only by digging down deep into the realm of the hidden and obscure. Our work, if it is to abide, must rest upon principles. Our uses and methods in the guidance of the weak and erring must be built up on a solid basis of truth and fact, if they are to be genuine helps. With this motive, then, clearly understood, let me ask you to follow me, while I take up a few of the links in the chain of abstract thought which we should endeavor to keep always free from rust and ambiguity.

It matters not how we consider the evil that is in

our world and in ourselves, whether physical or moral ; whether causing all life to travail and groan with pain, or working itself out in individual natures in the darkness which leads to despair, or in the bitterness which forces from the lips even of stoics the cry of anguish ; whether, again, massed in universal and irreconcilable opposition to God's righteous will, and shaking the world with the tread of battle, or exhibiting itself in the same awful conflict within the narrower sphere of personal wills—it matters not in which aspect it is contemplated, it is not only the most difficult and baffling of all subjects intellectually considered, but also the most prolific of all sources of moral doubt. We cannot have a doctrine of sin or of holiness apart from a doctrine of evil. We cannot interpret the keynote, far less follow out the divine harmony, of Christian morality, unless we shall first determine what evil is, whether as temptation assailing the will, or as ripened wickedness issuing from the will.

Now, of all the methods devised or known for determining the nature, the essence, of evil, and its place in the universe, there are only two that, in these days, especially concern us and our work. And,

speaking generally, I would say, before going further into the subject, that we must understand these rival methods so clearly and definitely as that we shall be able to tell any inquirer, who craves to know, why we reject the one and embrace the other. For so only can we hope to meet successfully the gravest of all intellectual troubles on moral subjects, and the darkest of all doubts within the sphere of the will and personal accountability.

I have said that just now, by reason of the drift of living thought, there are only two theories of moral evil which immediately concern us. An impassable gulf separates them. They stand facing each other like Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The one flatters the strength and pride of the intellect, is impatient of mystery, insists upon levelling down what it cannot overpass, treats contradictory things as though they had no right to exist, and punishes their impertinent intrusion by denying them a place in the field of legitimate thought, is intolerant of facts which refuse to be squared and jointed and piled into logical completeness. The other assumes the existence of mysteries and contradictions which, though they never cease to be

lawful objects of thought and healthy incentives to the loftiest efforts of reason, are yet so far above all possibility of precise, logical formulation as to belong, in the last resort, to the domain of faith ; it admits facts which it cannot reconcile ; it finds the grounds of experiences and motives in the soul and of obligations in men's outward life, away down or away up, in a region whose air is too ethereal for the lungs of reason ; it trusts, believes, adores, in spite of the clouds and thick darkness which veil the providences of the Almighty in a world of sin and sorrow ; it sees the evil, yet casts no suspicion on the perfect goodness of God ; it insists that what is inscrutable in the divine administration can be unravelled only by a *moral clue*, that it is only on the spiritual side of our nature that the door of the soul opens out upon the infinite ; recognizing the hopeless incompatibility, in this life, between the demand for abstract, logical completeness of statement touching the meaning of moral evil, and the demand of the two strongest moral instincts of nature—that of contrition for wrong-doing and that of aspiration after holiness and perfection—it regards the practical satisfaction of the latter as of vastly

more moment than that of the former, and declares to every soul that in the end, whatever its doubts, questionings, difficulties, speculations, it must choose between the satisfaction of the intellect and the satisfaction of the conscience, between the authority of the intellectual and the authority of the moral consciousness. Again, for the contrast is by no means exhausted, the one theory is that of human philosophy running through a long series of schools—pantheistic, atheistic, materialistic, positivist, utilitarian—cropping out in the dawn of the old pagan thought, speaking out boldly in the measured thinking of Lucretius, reaffirmed with a wealth of subtle and vigorous reasoning in the pages of Spinoza, approached from another side and under modern influences again formulated by the faithless logic of Comte and John Stuart Mill, it has been ever changing its dress while itself has remained unchanged. Scholars and thinkers are familiar with its processes and formulas, while common minds are quite as much so with its practical conclusions. This is not the place to recapitulate, far less describe, the former ; but it is properly and even necessarily a part of my task to advert to the latter.

It is characteristic of this theory to bring down the distinction of right and wrong from the region of our personal relations with God to that of human expediency, to determine the moral character of human action by its consequences, not by antecedent and immutable moral distinctions, to declare that there is no evil in the universe which cannot be explained in some way as a step in the development of good, that evil is only good in the making, that sin is only that form of moral evil which arises of necessity from the present imperfections and limitations of our being, that it will disappear somewhere, as morning mists before the rising sun, in the widening, ascending cycles of man's self-centred, self-impelled evolution, and finally, that what we understand by sin and hell, by eternal law, by punishment, by holiness, by redemption and everlasting life are the dreams of a theological nightmare, worthy of the childhood rather than the manhood of the race.

The other theory, it might be enough to say, is that of Christianity. The buttresses on which it rests are what we believe to be the written Word of God and the indisputable facts of our own moral con-

sciousness. In conformity with both, it declares all moral evil to be an outrage on the perfect holiness of God, that it is always and everywhere in antagonism to His righteous will, that it not only "is not," but "cannot be subject to His law," that sin is the transgression of the law—the fruit of a will hostile to the will of God, and hostile in such a sense that, while its liberty lasts and itself continues to move on the same plane of mere nature as now, no conceivable series of evolutions can alter its character; or emancipate it from its doom. The mystery does not change the fact. Evil is evil, sin is sin, whatever our inability to account for its origin, or to reconcile it with the love and wisdom and omnipotence of God. It is here, and no speculations or inventions of man can make it otherwise than it is. Its guilt does not arise from his imperfections or limitations, nor will it disappear as they disappear. A lie is a lie always and everywhere. So with impurity, disobedience, stealing, covetousness, pride, selfishness, and the whole brood of iniquity. The graces of a holy life are not the vices of a wicked one purified and transformed by growth and development. The Christian theory of

evil utterly and absolutely repudiates any such pantheistic legerdemain in shifting the lights and shadows around the throne of God's immutable perfection, and so evolving the sweet from the bitter, the true from the false, the good from the bad, angels from devils.

Now, if we were to cross the threshold of many hearts, and confront their deepest, sorest doubts, touch the guilty secret of a waning faith, the worm gnawing at the vitals of their religion, we should find, the moment the veil was lifted, that while their feet rested on the Christian theory of sin and evil, their heads and hearts were busy with teachings, or were tossed and distressed by temptations, or were insensibly breathing an atmosphere that had issued from its versatile and seductive antagonist. Many a sheep is still in our fold, outwardly loyal to its Great Shepherd—apparently devout, obedient, and penitent, bowing low in confessions, listening to absolutions, partaking of the sacrifice, and yet with the very foundations of his spiritual life worm-eaten and honeycombed by confused notions, vacillating views about sin and duty, about God in Christ, about heaven and hell, and even

about the life to come—all of them imported, perhaps, into his household and then into his mind, without a suspicion of what was going on, by much of the current literature of the day, or by neighbors and acquaintances whose good fellowship was allowed to offset their intellectual and moral looseness on all subjects of deepest moment to the character and work of a Christian man.

Much as the priest may do, as preacher, to check this infection which travels almost upon the air-currents that sweep by us, he must do more, as the pastor, who makes it his business to know his sheep one by one, and to be known of them in all closest and tenderest overtures of sympathy and guidance. He must, in times like these, sift, as well as number his people, searching out the weak among the strong ; and where he finds one perplexed and half shaken in his hold on the faith in regard to these subjects, let him grasp that soul with a hand warm with love, and yet firm with the authority that becomes the priestly office, and, pointing out the peril, recall to him the terms of his Christian oath as Christ's soldier and servant, and prove to him by Scripture and right reason, as well as by the univer-

sal experience of the faithful, that unless what he has believed and acted upon as a member of Christ's Body be true, that unless sin and guilt, God's eternal law, and man's immortal life be what they are declared to be, then the half of his moral nature drops into a hopeless bank, and repentance, remorse, the judgment to come, forgiveness in this world, or condemnation in the next, from being among the most awful realities, sink away into the category of things that ought to die and make no sign.

(3) *It is very needful that all committed to our charge should be taught, as clearly as such an abstruse and tangled subject will allow, the meaning and scope of the supernatural.* The question is a large one—perhaps the largest and, in many respects, the most difficult that can engage our thoughts. I shall treat only such aspects of it as have an immediate bearing upon the practical duties involved in the cure of souls. Both observation and experience in pastoral work prove that many of the most troublesome and formidable doubts among our flocks arise not only from questions involving the supernatural, but still more from clouded and indefinite notions as to what really

constitutes the supernatural as contrasted with and related to nature. The scepticism of the day is constantly assailing it as though it were a mortal enemy to all certain truth. Christian apologists as constantly defend it as of the last consequence to the foundations of the faith. There is no argument, no dispute, on the border line which divides science from religion in which the reality of the supernatural is not the foremost topic of debate.

But wide and deep, on all sides, as is the interest attaching to the subject, I doubt whether more than a small minority of Christians believers would be able to give any intelligent and satisfactory description of the supernatural, even as ordinarily stated or implied in scientific or practical theology. The very ambiguity and vagueness of their views in regard to it often puts them at the mercy of a class of sceptics who win cheap victories over the unskilled and the unwary, by a clever manipulation of terms not exactly defined or understood; or by loading down with unfair uses and interpretations some central and commanding word like that now spoken of, trusting to escape rebuke or detection

because of the imperfect knowledge, or the absolute ignorance of those whose faith is assailed.

It does not fall within my purpose to show how largely the busy, restless, money-loving, pleasure-seeking spirit of the age has depressed in some, and deadened in others, the sense of things invisible and eternal. It is enough that I allude briefly to what is said of the supernatural by schools of thought avowedly or covertly antagonistic to Christianity. These range all the way from absolute denial of its existence to such limitations of it as would exclude all the miraculous features of our religion, and leave no room or chance for special divine intervention of any sort.

There is the positivist, who restricts the source of all certain knowledge to sensation. With him, nature's laws are the only providence and obedience to them the only piety. The order in nature, which we are wont to regard as the sufficient proof of a designing mind working behind and through nature, is admitted by him, while in the same breath he denies that it affords valid evidence of the existence of such a mind, because the evidence is necessarily of a kind which cannot be verified by proof refera-

ble to sensation. From this it inevitably follows that, as there is no sure proof of the existence of a personal God, it may be lawfully questioned whether there be any ; that as there is nothing binding upon us except what can be proved to exist, there is neither ground nor room for faith ; and that, as the future and invisible are uncertain, the great business of man is to attend to the affairs of the present world, which alone is certain. Thus the realm of the supernatural is eliminated from the universe by this remorseless and narrow logic of materialism. There is nothing left but nature, with its immutable order. Mind, as distinct from matter, will and liberty and moral obligation, whether as attributes of God or man, whether working above nature or through it, are swept out of existence. The miraculous in any shape is impossible.

Next comes the school of pantheistic naturalism which, moving from a different stand-point and along a different road of argument, affirms the identity of mind and matter, of God and nature, and so confounds the two as to leave no opportunity for miraculous interposition in the order of the world—

no room for supernatural power of any kind whatsoever. After this, and as a somewhat milder, though equally effective, denial of the supernatural, we have the barren and illogical deism which, admitting the existence of a Creator, separates him so far from the creature as to destroy the possibility of intercourse between them. The universe is a mere machine which, once built and wound up by its Maker, has no further use for him. Law once established passes beyond the reach of the Law-giver. Nature's order is unchangeable and incapable of interference from without. Here again, logically considered, there is no place for will, liberty, moral obligation, or supernatural manifestation. Necessarily, it is a fundamental postulate of all these theories that, if there be any religion, it must be the product of human consciousness, and can have, as an object of worship, nothing higher than itself. The stream cannot rise higher than its source.

Now, it is not these theories, as such, that find a lodgment in the minds or endanger the faith of believers in the divine and supernatural; but the half-diluted, half-concealed results of them, filtered, as they generally are, through much of the current

popular literature of the day. It is by these that persons of simple faith are first perplexed, then deceived, and finally misled. The poison is in their blood before they know it. With little or no antecedent thought or reasoning, quite unconscious of any decided tendency in that direction, they find themselves, with surprise and, perhaps, with pain, induced to question the miraculous attestations of the Gospel and to doubt the reality of all supernatural signs. Before they know it, the head begins to contradict the heart. Such reasoning as they are capable of, resting upon one-sided premises, begins to be arrayed against the profoundest instincts and aspirations of their souls. Carried thus far, it requires but a few steps more to bring them face to face with the broad issue whether Christianity itself be anything more than a respectable superstition or a fond dream—a splendid delusion of the human mind. But whether or no any are swept out so far as this from their proper anchorage, it is quite certain that not a few among the faithful are sorely troubled by difficulties springing from this source. It cannot be otherwise, and that guide of souls is at once blind and foolish who ignores such

difficulties, or fails to put himself in a condition to grapple with them. In these days, it is quite impossible for the average believer to escape altogether the influence of teachers and writers of commanding abilities and extensive scientific attainments who insist that nature's unchangeable order is the only providence ; that the world has in it no active intelligent principle of causation, that phenomena are the only things of which we have any knowledge, and that these are bound together only as sequences and by an invariable and endless succession. The moment the mind holds parley with such notions or in any degree passes under their sway, faith in the reality of a special providence and in the value of prayer in reference to temporal affairs begins to wither ; the ground and motive for confiding petitions addressed to the Father of heaven and earth are narrowed ; supernatural signs, instead of becoming an evidence for religion, become a difficulty ; the inspiration which guarantees the truth of the Sacred Books evaporates into an afflatus common to all the wise and good of every age and every race.

Now, how are we to meet cases of this kind,

which, ordinarily, will be revealed not to the preacher, but to the pastor moving among the individual members of his flock? Some will say, perhaps, with dogmatic promptness, denounce the tendency as a sin; drag forth the doubt from its hiding-place, and transfix it with the arrow of priestly authority; assail the guilty thing as a temptation of the devil. This will do where we are sure that the mind we are dealing with has been culpably careless in its reading or in its associates, or has knowingly encouraged the evil, habitually welcomed the temptation. But this is not the case I am supposing, this is not the character that I am claiming to be worthy of our sympathy and solicitude. Those whom I have in mind would be driven first into indignation, then into despair, and then into utter unbelief by such treatment. The house has in it a dangerous tenant, an unclean spirit. We may drive him out for the moment by harsh blows; but we can keep him out only by putting a safe tenant, a clean spirit, in his place. The bad can be expelled only by the good, the false by the true. The teaching—the influence which has produced the unhappy results—must be overcome by the power of an oppo-

site teaching, an opposite influence. You will expect from me only the merest outline of what is required. This whole subject, in its principles and its details, demands the closest study by every priest having the cure of souls. He will be guilty of inexcusable negligence if he fail to go to the bottom of it, as well in its philosophical as its theological and ethical bearings. The perils of the time lift to the gravity of a moral and intellectual crime all crude and superficial knowledge in regard to it.

What, then, is nature? What is the supernatural? Nature is that which is perpetually being born after its own type. It is the realm of invariable sequences. Given a certain antecedent, and there will always be the same consequent. It has no inherent, self-sustained power to make itself other than it is. It is tied up to uniformities of phenomenal succession. Law as applied to it stands merely for the way in which one thing follows another. It is simply a mode of subsistence and of succession—the only fixed term between God and man. Instead of being the whole universe, it is only a part of it, and not unlikely a comparatively small part of it.

On the other hand, the supernatural stands for the whole realm of free agency, of will power, of moral liberty, whether in God or man. All power that is above nature, and that has the capacity to modify, suspend, or in any way change nature by working through or upon it from without, belongs to the supernatural. In man that power is limited by conditions which limit and define his agency in all forms and in all directions. In God this power is unlimited, and is subject to no conditions, knows no control save that imposed by the supreme end for which He created and governs the universe. Though free, because voluntary and self-determining, it is amenable to motives and operates in obedience to law—the law of moral being and moral ends. The supernatural is always *supermaterial and often superhuman*. It is always the latter—when God acts either immediately or mediately through forms or agencies appointed by Himself, these often including the free will of His creatures as well as the functions and properties of matter. Thus defined, it sweeps out illimitably on all sides beyond nature, and includes immeasurably the largest as well as the highest part of the universe. So far

from being what those theories of which I have spoken would represent it—a mere fog-land of unreality, a region built upon the shadows and dreams and imaginings of our own minds—the favorite home and refuge of magic and superstition, of which we may with equal assurance affirm or deny anything we please—so far from being this, it is the region of realities which transcend those within the domain of the senses, as much as the evidential authority of our own moral and intellectual consciousness transcends that of mere sensation, or that of the empirical knowledge built upon sensation, or that of the logical understanding, which cannot overpass the bounded sphere of such knowledge. Nature is the slave. It is predetermined and cannot of itself become other than it is. We do not find freedom, self-determining power, or the truths and motives, the energies and dignities, the lapses and corruptions, inseparable from that freedom and power, until we pass out of nature into the supernatural. Man, then, belongs partly to nature and partly to the supernatural. All not included in his moral being belongs to the former; all included in his moral being—the will, and that which *ought*

to govern the will, the conscience—belong to the latter. God, on the other hand, though He is in nature, though He is “all in all,” is no part of nature. The creature lives and moves in the Creator, but is not, therefore, a part of the Creator, any more than a house when finished is part of the man who built it. Of all nature God is the maker and builder. However we may reason from the power that creates to the thing created, or *vice versa*, they are distinct entities, and cannot be confounded without confounding the necessary laws of thought, as well as the fundamental conditions of mind and matter.

Now, if the existence of a tree will in man be granted, we have a postulate on which the whole fabric of the supernatural, so far as we require to know it, whether merely supermaterial or entirely superhuman, can be built. And, on the other hand, if this be denied, “neither the supernatural in any possible form, miraculous, or otherwise, nor any other question of religion or morality, is worth contending for.” Now, to give what has been said in a general way, on this subject, a practical direction, let us see in a few words, how it may be made to

disentangle and light up our thinking on that focal point of supernatural power in its relation to Christianity, *i.e.*, the miraculous. That we have a free will is a matter of personal consciousness. It is as indubitable as our personal identity. It is not more certain that A is not B, than it is that A and B are free agents. But in the free will of man we all have the experience, and if experience, positive evidence, of a power which, however inferior in its range, is similar in kind to that which is supposed to operate in producing a miracle. What the less actually does within the domain of our *experience*, the greater in degree, while the same in kind, may do, *for adequate reason*, in the domain of *faith*. “In the will of man we have the solitary instance of an efficient cause in the highest sense of the term, acting among and along with the physical causes of the material world, and producing results which would not have been brought about by any invariable sequence of physical causes left to their own action. We have evidence, also, of an *elasticity*, so to speak, in the constitution of nature which permits the influence of human power on the phenomena of the world to be exercised or suspended

at will without affecting the stability of the whole. We have thus a precedent for allowing the possibility of a similar interference of a higher Will on a grander scale provided for by a similar elasticity of the matter subjected to its influence. Such interferences (of the supernatural with nature), whether produced by human or by superhuman will, are not contrary to the laws of matter ; but neither are they the results of those laws. They are the work of an Agent who is independent of the laws, and who, therefore, neither obeys nor disobeys them.* Again says the same writer : “ We may doubtless believe that God from the beginning so ordered the constitution of the world as to leave room for the exercise of those miraculous powers which He foresaw would at a certain time be exercised, just as He has left similar room for the exercise, within narrower limits, of the human will. The fundamental conception, which is indispensable to a true apprehension of the nature of a miracle, is that of the distinction of *mind* from *matter*, and of the power of the former, as a personal, conscious, and free agent, to influence the phenomena of the latter. We are conscious of

* Dean Mansel on Miracles. “ Aids to Faith,” pp. 28-30.

this power in ourselves ; we experience it in our every-day life ; but we experience also its restriction within certain narrow limits, the principal one being that man's influence upon foreign bodies is only possible through the instrumentality of his own body. Beyond these limits is the region of the miraculous. In at least the great majority of the miracles recorded in Scripture, the supernatural element appears, not in the relations of matter to matter, but in that of matter to mind—in the exercise of a personal power transcending the limits of man's will." This is the key to the philosophical side of the whole Christian argument for miracles. It may be put in other forms and greatly expanded in various directions, but substantially this is the ground on which it rests.

But from this particular application of the supernatural in its relation to nature, we may advance to one vastly broader and deeper—to one which, when really apprehended, not only fortifies our belief in the supernatural as a realm above nature, but our almost instinctive conviction that there is no competent interpreter of nature but the supernatural, of the seen but the unseen, of the material but the

spiritual, of the temporal but the eternal. And just this, broadly stated, is the teaching of the written Word of God. If proof were needed that *mind* is a truer image of God than *matter*, and that it is only as we know mind that we can know matter, it is found in the fact that what are called the sciences of invariable succession have borrowed the very terms they use, *i. e.*, *law*, *order*, and *cause*, from the science which has to do with will-power and conscience, moral action and moral duty. As applied to nature—to matter—they have a figurative meaning, and it is only when they are used in connection with moral existence and relation they have a literal meaning. “What do we know of *law* as *law* except by and through our personal consciousness of duty? The conception comes to us not through our knowledge of *what is*, but through our knowledge, or rather *feeling*—discernment—of *what ought to be*. Again, what know we of causation save by our experience of the creative, fashioning energy of our personal wills? So with *order*, *unity*, *totality*. We find them in nature only because they are antecedently in our own consciousness as the witnesses of the indivisible self—the human

personality.” It is that in man which is above nature—supermaterial, supernatural, the very image of the God and Father of all, as will, wisdom, goodness, speaking through man, as well as through Providence and Revelation, of law, causation, order, unity—it is this that lifts “all that we see from *Chaos* into *Cosmos*, from the many into the one,” and spreads out all nature as one mighty parable of the attributes and purposes of God.

Much as I have said under this head, I am aware that I have scarcely accomplished the aim I had in view, which was to indicate the line of thought and inquiry to be taken up by the guide of souls who seeks to be even tolerably well equipped for his work. The desire for brevity has, I fear, deprived some of these statements—not my logic (for that has not been attempted)—of the clearness needful to their value as helps to the further prosecution of the subject by those charged with the cure of souls.

(4) I conclude what I have to say on the general mode of dealing with sceptical tendencies among our flocks, with a few suggestions on several closely related topics.

Before we appeal to, or attempt to put in con-

vincing array, the Christian evidences in any given case, the following points should be thoroughly cleared up, and definitely established in the minds with whom we have to deal.

(1) Leave no doubt as to the kind of evidence of which alone the subject is susceptible, and which alone can be expected. No moral or religious subject is capable of demonstrative proof. The only approach possible to what is equivalent to such proof is necessarily along the road of cumulative probability. One line of proof standing apart may be too weak to establish conviction, though strong in itself. The same may be true of even two or three. But when one individual part, or many individual parts of the whole scheme may fail, all the parts, bound together in organic unity, the whole compacted and strengthened by that which each joint supplies, will not, cannot fail. One single strand or a score of strands may not hold the ship to her moorings, but the cable woven of a hundred strands will.

Again, not only must the proofs be collected and organized into a single whole in order that the blows they deliver shall be effective, but the *qual-*

ity of the evidence, *as a whole*, must be clearly manifested. The evidence which sustains Christianity is all such as man is competent to consider. It invites him to calculations of probability precisely similar to those which enter into his every-day life, and without which he would be powerless to direct his private affairs for a single hour. It is but the repetition of the task familiar to courts and juries in meting out justice between man and man. The verdict is given on the facts as adduced, and after sifting, and weighing what sundry witnesses testify about the facts.

On the other hand, it must be shown and insisted on that the objections to Christianity spring mainly, if not entirely, from our ignorance and presumption. They assume that we know more than we do or can know of the modes of the Divine administration—of what God may have permitted—of what is possible and impossible—of the ultimate development of an imperfectly developed system and of its relations with the whole universe. It scarcely need be added that these considerations, which are of such vital moment in all sound and candid thinking on this great theme, were developed and enforced

by the masterly genius of Bishop Butler, and with a style of reasoning which, though now quite out of fashion in some quarters, is as invincible to-day as it was in the generation in which it first appeared.

(2) The rule so universally observed in the affairs of life, viz., that our beliefs and convictions must be determined by *the weight of evidence, even though every difficulty be not met*. The only question fairly at issue must ever be, whether the general evidence for Christianity outweighs the difficulties which cannot be separated from its truths. It opened, as from its nature it must do, a wide field for objections. These objections are not only numerous, but in some instances unanswerable by finite knowledge. If set aside at all, it must be by proofs so comprehensive as to sweep around them, while permitting them to stand as rocks in mid-ocean, which, though themselves unmoved, do not hinder the currents rolling around and by them; or as cavernous depths in the mountain, which, though themselves unlighted, raise no question that the great mass within which they are buried is bathed by the rays of the sun. While it is the avowed aim of unbelief not only to discover objections, but to mag-

nify and exaggerate them when discovered, it is no part of our duty to ignore or belittle them, however we may seek to reduce them to their proper limits. The religion of Christ is here, and it has been here for a long series of centuries. It has proved itself to be, beyond all doubt, the most commanding and continuous force in all history. This is the fact. How can it be accounted for? It claims (and the claim is an integral part of the fact itself), a supernatural, a Divine origin, certified by the miraculous interventions of its Author, as well as by its own contents. Now, the one broad, fundamental issue is, whether there is any satisfactory way of explaining the fact except by admitting this claim, in spite of all the objections that human ingenuity can allege against it. Determine this, and all side-issues drop into their place and may be left to take care of themselves.

(3) Passing over textual, chronological, historical discrepancies in the Bible, of which modern criticism has made the most in its power, as a subject too intricate and extensive to be treated in this connection, I come to what are known as the moral difficulties of both Testaments—difficulties which, more

than any other, trouble the faithful in their own thinking and in their discussions and controversies with unbelievers.

These difficulties are connected, in the Old Testament, with God's dealings and commands and with the conduct and character of agents chosen by Him to execute special missions or to indite portions of the Sacred Records ; also with the tone and language of certain books—as the imprecatory passages in the Psalms ; and in the New Testament, with our Lord's ignorance of things which, on the supposition of His omniscience, He could not but have known ; with the alleged radical diversities and personal changes of tone, of doctrine, and of expectation among the apostles, notwithstanding they had the promise that they should “ be guided by the Spirit into all truth.” And then there is the difficulty of explaining the *Anthropomorphism* under which God appears in the Bible, and of determining how far the Christian theory of it is applicable to other things mentioned in the Scriptures.

There is the difficulty, too, arising from the Divine commendation of persons as just and righteous,

some of whose acts are known to have been unjust and unrighteous ; or that arising from the case of Abraham sacrificing his son, or from the case of the judicial action of the Israelites in extirpating various nations under the command of a God of righteousness, or from that of Jael in the treacherous murder of Sisera, or, generally, from the moral imperfection of the Mosaic system, notwithstanding it claimed to be at once the revelation and ordinance of God, who is perfect in all His ways.

I state some of the worst of this class of difficulties, not with a view to attempting their solution, but simply for the purpose of insisting that it is the duty of every guide of souls, in these troubled days, to qualify himself, by reading and study, to answer them wherever they may be met. They are serious, but not insuperable. They may perplex, but they should not distress, any soul. They may excite doubt, but they should not shake conviction. Our recent literature has taken up the whole subject, and argued and reargued it, with profound learning and convincing logic. What has been done in this line should be as familiar to us as the alphabet. Every difficulty has not vanished, but certainly the most

formidable, and those over which modern doubt has uttered its most triumphant cries, are, in virtue of what has been written of late, very much less formidable than they once seemed.*

(4) No pains should be spared in urging wise and timely cautions upon those of our people, who are unduly moved by the various phases of the conflict now going on between the recent knowledge gathered from all the fields of modern exploration, and the Holy Scriptures. What I mean will sufficiently appear in very few words. All knowledge claiming to be such is not yet finally ascertained to be knowledge.† The present tone and attitude of sci-

* It is enough to mention with special commendation, for their clear style and vigorous treatment of these questions, "The Boyle Lectures for 1871 and 1872," by James Augustus Hessey, D.C.L., Archdeacon of Middlesex, and with still more emphatic approval, Canon Mozley's "Ruling Ideas in Early Ages, and their Relation to Old Testament Faith"—a work the gravity and power of whose reasoning recall the noblest pages of Bishop Butler's "Analogy."

† A recent able writer says: "It is remarkable how far physical science often falls short of satisfying the requirements it rigorously imposes upon itself, although some men of science seem to be singularly unmindful of the fact."

There is scarcely any limit to the instances that might be cited in proof of this. Haeckel's "History of Creation" is a

ence toward the Scriptures are not borne out by its actual achievements. Every day discloses how much it has given way to dogmatism, and how much it has drawn upon conjecture and imagination. It is yet busily engaged in revising many of its over-confident conclusions, as well as in pushing

noteworthy case. It is simply amazing with what audacity this author assumes the unreasoning credulity of his readers. His mechanical and monistic theory of the origin of the universe rests largely on unsupported, unverified conjecture as to the spontaneous generation of the first life-cell, and as to a continent of fossil man-like apes buried somewhere under the Indian Ocean, and as to a hundred other things which have hardly the plausibility of clever guesses.

Professor Huxley, notwithstanding he saw "Extinguished theologians lying about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes lay beside that of Hercules," is a very conspicuous transgressor in this way. No one who heard his American addresses will soon forget his illogical and unscientific treatment of his famous primitive American horse, whose five toes were evolved into a club-foot, as he claimed, this club-foot being triumphantly cited as the sufficient demonstration of the hypothesis of creation by evolution, *i.e.*, a very limited variation of species being assumed as the proof of the transmutation of species throughout the universe. *

Professor Tyndall has also grievously broken the fundamental canon of modern investigation. In his celebrated address at Birmingham, a few years ago, while admitting that the phenomena of mind and will could not be amenable to the

its advance into new realms, where, any day, it may suddenly drop upon some secret of nature which will modify radically the whole fabric of its labors.

On the other hand, let us remember that it would be great rashness in us to affirm that we have ex-

canons of physical science, he yet went on to discuss with the coolest assurance these same phenomena precisely as though they could be tested and judged by the laws of matter. Again, not a little of Herbert Spencer's pretentious scepticism fades away under the application of his own declaration as to "Excessive confidence in reason, as compared with simpler modes of intellectual activity." The illustrations might be indefinitely multiplied from the pages of the most reputable scientists of the day. We have had instructive essays on the mutability and mortality of literature. We might have still more instructive ones on the mutability and mortality of the achievements of science. The Ptolemaic gave way to the Copernican theory of the universe, Descartes' theory of vortices to Sir Isaac Newton's theory of attraction, the corpuscular hypothesis of light to the undulatory hypothesis, the convulsionists in geology to the uniformitarians. And now we are in the midst of the war between creationists and evolutionists in natural history—both parties being equally sanguine of victory. Mental science has exhibited even greater vicissitudes and fluctuations, having passed, within a century, from the highest ground of supernaturalism to a point where the instincts of animals and the moral nature of man threaten to become one and the same general subject of study.

hausted the meaning of the *whole* of God's written Word.* Long-received interpretations of a few passages have already been changed. Doubtless, some interpretations now current will undergo a like change in the near or far-off future.

But thus far no changes have occurred which have affected one hair's breadth the fundamental

In connection with this line of thought it would be well to read carefully Professor Jevons' "Principles of Science," which has passed into a text-book of scientific method. He does not hesitate to say, as his deep conviction, "that before a vigorous logical scrutiny the reign of law will prove to be an unverified hypothesis, the uniformity of nature, an ambiguous expression, the certainty of our scientific inferences, to a great extent, a delusion." And further, "That our experience is of the most limited character compared with what there is to learn, while our mental powers seem to fall infinitely short of the task of comprehending and explaining fully the nature of any one object."

* "It is not at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscerned. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and in the last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before."—BISHOP BUTLER.

The truth of these words has been often illustrated since his day, and it will be so quite as often in coming time.

principles, the essential mysteries, of the faith ; and it is, in the nature of the case, impossible that any discoveries in the world of sensation, of physical fact, of necessary material sequences, can undermine things belonging to a totally different order of being—the kingdom of moral liberty and of God's dealings with His own children whom He hath redeemed unto life eternal by the precious blood of His own dear Son.*

* The chief characteristic of what is called "the modern spirit" is the demand for verification by an appeal to facts. Theology is perfectly willing to submit to this appeal. As much as any other science, it is deduced from facts, however its mysterious foundations may rest upon authority. As much as any other science, it offers to verify its doctrines by facts—facts which are not the less facts because they belong to the realm of the supernatural.

But in this process of verification it insists upon the vigorous observance of that fundamental canon of all sound investigation, viz., that all facts and doctrines, whether of religion or of science, must be verified within the sphere to which they respectively belong. Those of science cannot be verified within the domain of religion, and, *vice versa*, those of religion cannot be verified within the domain of science. A late profound thinker has justly said, and it is a proposition which cannot be disputed, that one department of knowledge cannot give laws to another. "Mathematics cannot receive laws from chemistry, nor physics from biology. Phenomena are inde-

Speaking generally, it may be safely affirmed that, wide-spread and profound as may have been the agitations and upheavals produced in the domain of religion by the progress of modern knowledge, the grand result thus far has been, not to unsettle, but more firmly to establish, the foundations of Christianity. Certainly, it has more disciples, is attracting more of the world's attention, enters

pendent as well as interdependent." The conclusions arrived at in every science are valid only within the range of the data on which they rest. Now religion, or theology, the scientific form of it is ready to verify itself in answer to the demand of the modern spirit, if this canon be duly observed. Its truths belong to the sphere of inward experience; they are spiritual, and they must be spiritually discerned. "If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." History has its own tests of the facts within its domain; so likewise chemistry, physiology, geology, astronomy. Religion stands upon the same footing. Its tests are its own, and none others can be used. The religious life must be lived by him who seeks to verify the truths out of which that life springs. As we judge the laws of color by the laws of sound, as the doctrines of Christianity by experiments in the laboratory of science. Nothing is more unfair, more uncritical, more unscientific in the whole course of modern free thought, than its systematic and contemptuous disregard of this indisputable canon of verification in all departments of inquiry.

more largely into the thought and conduct of mankind, is more frequently brought to the front for praise or blame, is pushing its conquests over distant continents and far-off islands of the sea more vigorously, is, in all ways, doing more to elevate and comfort humanity, than in any past century of its existence. These surely are strange symptoms of that moribund condition into which certain advanced thinkers insist that it has passed. If these be the signs and proofs of decay, where shall we look for those of growth and power?

At the beginning of the discussion of this part of my general subject, I gave it as my opinion that the tendency to doubt this or that part, or the whole of our religion, was gaining ground among those within our borders, and that the evidences of it were too apparent to be denied. If it be, it constitutes the worst peril that we have to deal with, because it is an enemy concealed within the camp, moving about in silence and disguise, and, because so moving, all the more dangerous. My conviction is the result of extensive observation of the habits, the sympathies, the moral and intellectual drift, of those under twenty-five years of age—of us and among us

by Baptism and Confirmation, the sign of the Cross on their brows, the badge of the Christian vocation on their lives, the standard of Christ's kingdom in their hands ; and yet away down below the surface, coiled up among their secret thoughts, sometimes ominously lisped with bated breath among their companions or in the family circle, seldom confessed to those having authority in the Church, lies a more or less vaguely shaped distrust, a half paralyzing suspicion of great truths,

“ Which make us to ourselves
And to our God more dear.”

It is high time, indeed, that our pastorate should arouse from its apathy and gird on the weapons of its power. It must not wait to hear ; it must go out and listen. It must not wait to be sought by, it must go out and seek, the souls over whom this cloud is settling, and pour into them the light of Him who declared Himself the true “ light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

It has been my wish and purpose not only to call attention to this danger and to speak of it in terms of grave apprehension ; but also to offer such considerations as would serve to show the proper tone and

direction of our efforts to stay the evil ; without attempting a full discussion or an elaborate treatment of any one of the topics under review. However I may have failed in the latter, I shall, at least, have discharged my duty as to the former.

III.

THE GRACE OF ORDINATION:

HOW TO QUICKEN AND DEVELOP IT.

WE come together on divers occasions and for divers purposes unlike the present. We meet in Convention to transact the business of the Diocese. We meet socially to strengthen the bond of good-fellowship, and to stimulate mental activity by the interchange of the fruits of study and scholarship. We meet often to care for our Charities and Missions. I am thankful for so many opportunities for assembling together to consider joint interests and to set in order the things committed to our official guardianship. Each and all do good, and none of them should be neglected. But the present occasion stands widely apart from the rest. The call for it is a peculiar one, the attendance is voluntary, the Conference is private in the sense of not being open to reporters for the press, the bishop sits in the midst of his presbyters to give counsel on sub-

jects personal to us all, as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the Divine Mysteries. God grant that none may go away without feeling that it was good to be here.

I. The ministry is a vocation, but before that it is a gift of the Holy Ghost ; and we are here to inquire of one another, in sincerity of heart and with a deep sense of our infirmities, how it fares with that gift, what we are doing or leaving undone in that vocation. Every calling has an outer crust of routine which offers a genial soil for the growth of mechanical and perfunctory action. In spite of its sacred source, its holy surroundings, and its lofty purpose, the Christian ministry is no exception. To rise to its level requires an effort that overtasks even the devoutest minds. To bring it down to our own level is the inevitable and often the successful temptation pressing heavily upon us all. How we have met this temptation belongs to the secret record of our lives, open only to the eye of God. "Who art thou that judgest another?" But while we may not attempt this, we may consider the common peril that besets us and try to take up one another's burdens. Scarcely any two of us are strong or weak, tried or

comforted, blinded or enlightened, in the same way or in the same degree. If, then, our mutual counsel is to be wise and useful, it must be thought out and given on the principle of compensation—each offering something of his own to him that hath not. It is by this law that Christ's Body as a whole ministers of its power and riches to all its members, and then calls upon them to minister to each other according to the measure which the Spirit of God hath dealt to every man.

None in our calling, in any age, can think deeply of its wants and trials and dangers without falling back upon St. Paul's words to Timothy. Certainly, there are no other such words in Christian history. They have the freshness and fitness of to-day and burn with a fire which will never die. Among them is that exhortation which specially pertains to us here and now. "Therefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee by the laying on of my hands." (2 Timothy 1:6.) The force of the original is somewhat tamed by the translation, because it does not give the full figure used by the Apostle, *αναζωπυρειν*, to give new life to a flame already burning, to intensify an

already kindling heat, to push aside the embers and open up the live coals to the outer air. The gift of God is not only the outward commission, the Priestly Office, but the Grace which sanctifies it and fills it with divine energy. There was no reason to doubt Timothy's abundant zeal, and yet he was told there was room for more ; and if this was said to him, it may certainly be said to the most earnest among us. How, then, are we to push aside the smouldering ashes that have gathered upon that holy flame kindled within us by the Grace of Ordination. This is the question which I shall do what I can to answer, craving your help to remedy what I fear will prove the poverty and insufficiency of my own thoughts.

To meet this question no novel expedients, no fresh inventions, no original devices, can be found. It is idle to consult the spirit of the age, as we are bidden to do in so many matters requiring to be settled in these strange times. It is equally idle to ransack the stores of recently-acquired knowledge and experience. There has been a great deal of progress in many ways within our own generation, but none of it throws additional light upon this subject. So with all our modern studies and pursuits, whether

in the line of religion or of scholarship. We are shut up to what the Gospel, the Church, the Priesthood, the human heart have known and tried ever since the holy office was instituted. It is, indeed, an old story, and can become new only as it is inlaid with the life of our own souls. If our ministry is not the power it ought to be, the ideal of it is before us. If it be weak, if its tongue falter, if its divine fire be going or gone out, if it be soiled and hindered by the world and the flesh, if sinners do not hear, and saints are not edified by its message; the cause should be unearthed and set so plainly before us that there could be no chance for mistakes as to its character or its power. No two generations try the stuff our ministry is made of in precisely the same way. Peculiar and pressing as may be its temptations in our day, there is at least a family likeness between them and those of all the ages gone before. The ordeal may be different, but it is in no respect harder than it has been in every period of the Church's conflict with the world. Speaking generally, then, the cause is not to be found in any or all antagonisms specially characteristic of our time. In searching for the cause, it is

better to turn from the times in which our lot is cast to *ourselves*. The holy office is so constituted, and in every case is so conferred, that the highest range of its power, the purest type of its influence, can be attained only by observing the conditions inseparably bound up with it by its Author. No man can lawfully take the office unless he enter into a covenant with God to do the things which God declares, both in Scripture and in the settled judgment of the Church, must be done to make it what it was meant to be. The question, then, for us to meet is, have we kept these necessary conditions? have we done these necessary things? The answer will open up the whole subject, and as part of it the true cause of the partial paralysis which, there is grave reason to fear, has crept over "the gift that is in us by the laying on of hands."

II. It is the will of God that we shall conceive rightly of the sacred office itself. Can we claim to have done so? Have we not rather fallen away from the lofty vantage ground on which He has placed it? Do we feel habitually its dignity and importance as He intended we should? Is it in reality, to us not only Christ's chosen ambassador-

ship to humanity, but also the living voice of His Eternal Priesthood among men? Is it verily in our habitual thought the appointed instrument by which the Holy Ghost brings to bear on this world the hidden powers of the world to come? Does it, in our current estimate or in our actual administration, wield the solemn function of beseeching men, as in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God? Do the majesty of its source and the grandeur of its aim inspire us with a zeal which the world can neither give nor take away? Does it wear to our eyes the halo, does it cause our hearts to glow with the heavenly fervor of the Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists of old, or of the goodly fellowship of God's servants who all along the ages have glorified it by their labors? Or is it, on the other hand, to some of us only one of many lawful callings in life, a vocation seasoned with the sweets of intellectual leisure, a profession of calm and respectable surroundings, to which all truth is equally dear and all sides of human nature of equal interest?

In the long run, the Ministry will rise no higher as a practical power than our conception of it. It will take the color, breathe the spirit, wear the gar-

ments, of those who exercise it. Though of God and for God, it becomes in our keeping what we are ourselves. Now, none of us can help but remember how St. Paul magnified his office. There is nothing more characteristic of his Apostolate than his unspeakable sense of the glory and greatness, as well as of the matchless responsibility, of the Ministry. His very conception of it reacted upon his soul and gave to his words and his deeds a strange power over the minds and hearts of men. He might speak of *himself* as of little account, as strong only because of his weakness, as rude of speech, as less than the least of the Apostles ; but when he spoke of his Office he seems to have been unable to convey to others the profound awe which it excited. It was this that gave him, amid the very heat and tumult of his eloquence, the calm fervor, the poised purpose, the steady courage before which fell back, as angry waves from a rock-bound shore, Jewish factions clamoring for his blood and Gentile crowds exasperated at his fiery rebukes of their sins. It was this, more than anything else, that induced Felix to hand him over to Festus, and Festus in turn to hand him over to King Agrippa, and King Agrippa in his turn to exclaim, “ al-

most thou persuadest me to be a Christian." So with the epicureans and the stoics on Mars Hill. They were awed by his doctrine, but still more by the authority with which he spoke. At last they stood, face to face, with one who bore down upon them as one conscious of a sublime commission, and laden with the supernatural power of a function which neither angels nor men could confer. For the first time, captains, and governors, and kings, philosophers, and sophists, and rhetoricians fell back before one whose only claim to a hearing rested upon the simple affirmation, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God."

But as then, so now, the power of high office, the influence of commanding authority depends largely upon the personal meekness of its possessor. We must magnify the gift that is in us, but we may not magnify ourselves. It is, alas! a common weakness to confound our own pride and self-sufficiency with the intrinsic greatness of our priestly authority. The true priest of God rules only as he serves, and comprehends his mission only as he forgets self. Many a priest, in his endeavor to think grandly of his office, ends in thinking grandly of himself. All

of us, I suppose, are now and then chafed and humbled by the prevailing popular indifference to the authority of our Office. No one can go much among men without discovering mortifying proofs of this feeling. Bad as it is, there is but one way to correct it. We may preach the true doctrine of the Ministry, we may give any number of reasons why, as a Sacred Office, it ought to be more highly esteemed and more loyally obeyed; but the average man of this generation will believe what we say only as he sees it reproduced in our character and work. And yet it is nevertheless true, that a good share of our patience under difficulties and our courage amid opposition must arise from our holding fast a conception of the Office which the world refuses to accept. In our own thinking and feeling, we cannot take too high ground with regard to it. Sin does not cease to be sin because fools mock at it; neither does what is divine in this Holy Office collapse because the outside crowd doubt, or deny, or sneer at it.*

* The authority of the Holy Office arises not only from its divine institution, but from the power it was commissioned to exercise. This power, because it is the power intrusted to the

III. Again, it is the will of God that no priest shall think of, or treat his priesthood as an isolated thing, as a function standing apart from other governors of the Church—a spiritual body, is spiritual, and consists chiefly of the following particulars.

It is a power to admit into the Church of God such as are fit to be members of so holy a society, to teach and to exhort with wholesome doctrine, to tell men what they ought to do to be saved, to pray for the souls committed to our charge, to support and comfort the weak, to offer to God the oblations of the people, and to administer the sacraments which are generally necessary to salvation. It is a power moreover to warn and rebuke with authority, as being assured that God will ratify what we do in his name and for his honor ; to deny the sacraments to all such as render themselves unworthy of them, and to shut out of the Church the obstinately wicked, that they may no longer scandalize the Christian profession ; and to charge all other Christians not to have fellowship with them. And, on the other hand, it is a power to receive the penitent and to give them the comfort of absolution and guidance. And then, still further, there is the power to bind and loose, to remit and retain—the power of the keys. This power is included, indeed, in the particulars before-mentioned, but it is so eminent and peculiar a power of the Christian priesthood, and is so strongly and plainly set forth by Christ himself, that it deserves to be treated with special care. It is all the more needful that it should be so treated, because of the disposition, now so common, to reduce it to utter impotence, or to explain it away altogether. The words of the Ordinal that accompany the imposition of hands can scarcely be uttered now-

functions of the kingdom which, in its degree, it was ordained to represent. If the Church were only a voluntary society resting on a compact between in-
 adays, in some quarters, without exciting a shudder of dissent, or an open protest. And yet nothing can be more certain than that, as used by our Lord, they were intended to convey a distinct and positive authority to bind and to loose the sinner. The passion of Christ is the only ransom and propitiation for sin. But it is not more clear that he alone could and did offer them, than it is that he established a connection between the application of them to individual cases and the official ministrations of his deputies and ambassadors. "The power to loose, to put away sins, is exercised in many ways. (1) By baptism: 'I believe one baptism for the remission of sins,' so saith the Creed. (2) By the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: 'This is my blood which is shed for you, and for many for remission of sins;' so said our Saviour. (3) By prayer: 'Call for the presbyter of the Church; the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.' (4) By preaching the Word of reconciliation: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation." (5) By absolution. The priest absolves, or, to say more properly, God absolves by the priest. God remits sovereignly, imperially, primitively, absolutely; the priest's power is derivative, delegate, dependent, ministerial, conditional."

Archbishop Bramhall, from whom this statement is quoted, goes on to say: "It is true the Protestants differ among themselves whether the absolution of the priests be declarative or

dividuals, then the individual, whether only a member or an officer, could receive from it only what he gives to it, or if more, then only the same in kind.

operative ; that is about the manner ; and so do the Romanists (of his day) likewise one with another." * But he implies that there is no dispute as to the fact that absolution is part of the official power of the ministry, and that by Christ's warrant it is connected with the remission of sins. We find substantially the same teaching on this subject in the writings of Lancelot Andrews,† Jeremy Taylor,‡ William Beveridge,§ Isaac Barrow,|| Thomas Wilson,¶ and Joseph Bingham,** also of John Jewell †† and Richard Hooker ; ‡‡ the last three, however, insisting that absolution is a declaratory, not a judicial and operative act.

Now, if we believe in the authority of the priesthood at all, we must believe that it carries with it the power to do these things. And if it do, what a power is that which inheres in our orders ! How awful, how sacred, how far-reaching in its results, how tremendous in its responsibility ! It matters not in what ways the spirit of this age may attempt to dwarf, or

* "Archbishop Bramhall's Protestant Ordination Defended." Works, v., 213 (Ed. Oct., 1844).

† Bishop Andrews' sermon, "Of the Power of Absolution."

‡ Bishop Taylor's "Divine Institution of the Office Ministries."

§ Bishop Beveridge's sermon, "On Ministers of the Gospel, Christ's Ambassadors."

|| Dr. Isaac Barrow's "Power of the Keys."

¶ Bishop Wilson's sermon, on "Church Discipline."

** Joseph Bingham's "Sermon on Absolution."

†† Bishop Jewell's "Apology of the Church of England."

‡‡ Richard Hooker, "Eccl. Polity," Book vi., chap. vi., 3.

Nature can get from nature only what is in nature. But the Church is something else and something more, even the habitation of God through the Spirit—the very body of Christ, of which He is the Head and we are the members, having its living root in, and drawing its type and energy of growth from, his incarnation. Not only its corporate life centres in Him, but all its offices and ministrations derive their virtue from Him, and so derive it as that each is strengthened by the strength given to all and filled with the fulness of power with which all are endued. As no grace of a sanctified life can stand apart from the family to which it belongs, so no attribute, gift, or function of this kingdom can reach the limit of its force except by its organic union with all kindred attributes, gifts, and functions. Recent science accounts it one of its noblest triumphs to have discovered the principles of the correlation and transmutation of physical forces. Each is what it is because the rest are what they are.

dilute, or altogether set it aside as incompatible with the prevailing individualism in religion, its hold on the world is as indestructible as that of the Kingdom of God itself. The whole scheme of Christian redemption must dissolve and perish before it can pass away.

And so each is tributary to all, and all are tributary to each. The organization of the Church anticipated this discovery. It could not have been what it is had it not done so ; for the spiritual world is older and larger than the world of nature, and is so related to it that the world of nature is, in its highest aspect, only one continuous parable of the world of spirit. Hence, we can neither rightly conceive of, nor rightly administer the priesthood, except we view it as correlative with and dependent on all the powers clustered together in the Church. The Holy Ghost unifies, because it permeates them all, and what He gives to each, He gives for the sustenance and benefit of all.

Our Ministry, then, is distinct, but not separate. It is fed by the Sacraments, enlightened by the written Word, invigorated by the joint worship of believers, and strengthened by every saintly life in the kingdom of God. So we must regard it, if we would stir up its gifts and fully develop its latent power ; so, too, we must learn not to isolate the individual priest from the collective priesthood, nor the priesthood of any one age from the gathered experience and accumulated wisdom of the priest-

hood of all the Christian centuries. No member of the Order fit to be such but has contributed his quota in some form to the common stock. What any one priest has been, all priests may possibly become. None liveth to himself, none dieth to himself, but all help to swell the current of spiritual power and to give direction to every separate drop that falls into it. Here, again, matter is a parable of spirit. What an inspiration! what an impetus have we from this fact! No priest is alone. A mighty fellowship encompasses him. A power not his own is derived upon him as an heir of the labors, sacrifices, triumphs, griefs, joys, of all who have gone before in this holy vocation. Tender voices plead with him, if he will but hear them, from out the near or the distant past. Great names, pure lives, precious and honorable services for Christ and humanity gather about him to cheer his loneliness, to soothe his trials, to brace his courage, to anoint his lips, to make him patient under hardships, and valiant in every battle with the doubting and the ungodly. It is not only the angels, not only the spirits of just men made perfect and the general assembly of the first-born that look down upon him ;

but in that hovering cloud of witnesses are hands and feet, faces and hearts whose tasks have been what his are to-day. Eyes are there whose tears he is only weeping again, and ears into which the Master poured the same command to go forward, the same commission to preach, and baptize, and minister the bread of life. Cold must be that heart that finds no comfort in, gathers no unction from, this thought. Alas ! that all of us should not see more in it. How forlorn, how pitiful, how hopelessly weak that priest of God who, amid his awful responsibilities, drifts off from the great body of his brethren, living and dead, and lapses into some solitary corner of the vast field—a soldier severed from the army to which he belongs and uncheered by the standard which has so often led to victory—a member of an order peerlessly rich in its own history and unspeakably so in the blessing and honor of its eternal Head, and yet cut off from the common heritage. Oh, brethren, we are too much parted, too much scattered, too much isolated ; and so neither in will nor affection, in faith nor charity, in worship nor work are we what we might be. Half broken in spirit, half hopeless of bearing up under our

burdens, needing help and not getting it, sometimes driven to the verge of despair by the sense of the loneliness of our lot, let us close ranks and draw nearer, heart to heart, and shoulder to shoulder. It is all one and the same priesthood, one and the same labor, and we all need the same help. Thus shall we be enabled, in one way at least, to quicken the languishing flame of the Grace of our Orders.

IV. But I now come to certain bearings of my theme that relate more immediately to the interior, personal life of every deputy and steward of Christ. God can work, we know, by the ministry as an instrumentality external to ourselves. He can make the holy office effective and impart to it all virtue necessary to its end, apart from the spiritual condition of its incumbents. The individual priest may be an unworthy, even a vicious man, but the Holy Ghost can stand between him and the inherent power of his priesthood and cause it to do what it was ordained to do. Baptism, the Eucharist, and even Preaching and the more private ministrations to souls, will be what He makes them to be, though the human ministrant be a godless infidel. And yet ordinarily the Holy Spirit takes into account

not only the faculties and affections of the officiant, but his life and character also. Aside from the direct efficacy of priestly acts in this or that particular case, there is the influence flowing out upon neighboring souls from the priest's own spiritual condition, which has much to do with helping or hindering the overtures of divine mercy and the processes of divine grace. There is a difference quite immeasurable between the power of the ministry as exercised by a good man, and the power of it as exercised by a bad one. Hence, both Holy Scripture and the discipline of the Church are never weary of setting forth and insisting upon the fullest internal furnishing and the highest possible spiritual training of every ambassador of Christ. They not only remind him that he must go beyond the private Christian in grace and knowledge and purity; but they press upon him the use of the means by which he is enabled to do so. All must be diligent in prayer, but he must be conspicuously so. All must know the Scriptures, but he must know them with the fulness and accuracy of an expert. All must draw freely from the Church's treasury of grace, wisdom, and experience, so as to be imbued with the

spirit of its worship and discipline, but he must do so with such diligence and zeal as will render him a leader and ensample to the flock.

I have spoken first of prayer, and rightly so, for of all things, next to the immediate working of the Spirit of God, it is the foremost quickener and educator of the spiritual life. It were needless, surely, in your hearing to argue its power, or to cite the language of Scripture to prove its marvellous influence, or to appeal to experience in illustration of the wonders it has wrought. Nor need I recall what it has done for saintly lives from the beginning, nor how it has been the strength, the comfort, the refuge of God's true servants in every age. It is enough to know that it is plainly impossible to be a man of God, and far more to be a true priest of God, without it. As air is to the lungs, light to the eye, food to the blood, water to thirst, motion to the limbs, so is prayer to the soul. If low thoughts, carnal imaginations vex us ; if vanity and pride and self-consciousness seize upon us ; if waywardness and ambition push us down into the realm of mixed or positively debased motives ; if discontent and discouragement, or doubt deepening into

unbelief, or failure darkening into despair cripple and distress us; if trial of any sort, or sin of any name, or Satan himself assail us, prayer, beyond anything else, is the arm of our strength, the rock of our defence. Without it the ministry as a whole and the ministry in every part withers and dies. If our religion have any axioms, these are among them, and if we forget or disregard them we violate the command and throw to the winds the promises of God. It is not for me to indicate either the times, or the places, or the modes of prayer. I wish to do no more than insist upon its vital bearing upon our office and work. We are ordained to be leaders of the faithful in all acts of public worship. We pray for, as well as with them. In us their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, their supplications of penitence, their cries of intercession, their invocations and litanies are gathered up and voiced and presented to God through the one Advocate and Intercessor, the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ. But how can we do for them what we have not first done for ourselves? How can we ask them to confess and bewail their sins, when we have not done so ourselves? How can we bring them to feel the

awakening breath of the Spirit, when we have not felt it in our own hearts first? How can we infuse into them the holy unction and solemn fervor of the Church's voice, while our own souls, for lack of living, habitual communion with God, are cold and dark and dead? They have a right to look to us, not only to utter in advance of them the forms of devotion, not only to recite audibly in the sanctuary the words of the liturgy, but, by the contact with them of our own hearts, to fill them with sacred fire, to interpret their deep meanings, and bring home to the listening assembly their solemn appeals for help and pardon, mercy and comfort. But tell me who can do this if he has not first schooled himself for it by wrestling with the Spirit in secret prayer? No man can give to another more than he has in himself. But in himself no man has more of the things of the Spirit than the Spirit gives him. But the Spirit giveth to no man of the riches of His grace that seeketh Him not. Hence it is inevitable that a prayerless priest shall be cursed with spiritual impotence, and that the noblest acts which he undertakes to perform shall dwindle into a dumb show—an unholy pantomime.

Again, as heralds of Christ, it is required of us rightly to divide the Word and to feed the flock with food suited to their needs. Not only is the truth to be preached, but it is to be preached in due season. Now this phase of it, and now that. All need, indeed, the same truth, because all need the whole counsel of God ; but amid the strange and fitful fluctuations of the spiritual life, amid special and urgent besetments of doubt, or worldliness, or sin of any sort, some souls hunger after certain parts of the truth more than others, and they must be cared for accordingly. Whether regard be had to the Gospel itself or to the human need of it, its adaptations are almost infinite ; and that is a wretchedly-discharged ministry that does not habitually watch for the times and places which bring them into play. We can, if we choose, pile up the principles of theology and ethics like so much cord-wood, but we cannot so pile up souls or the temptations to which they are exposed. We have living wills to deal with, not fixed states of mind, and our work must be as flexible and versatile as the conditions which affect them. Now, it is only the Spirit of God, who knoweth what is in the hearts and lives

of men and what is contained in the treasury of God's truth, that can direct us in the task of selection and adaptation; and the only means open to us to secure such guidance is private entreaty, personal supplication. To neglect this, then, or to be careless and indolent about it, is to undermine the fundamental condition of our power and usefulness. No attainments in divinity, no furnishing of the intellect, no gifts of culture, no devotion to the arts of eloquent speech, no exhibitions of personal energy, no industry or labor, can affect this kind of unfaithfulness. If, then, we would preach well, we must pray well. It is God's will that it shall be so, and it were better to renounce our commission than to go counter to it.

But if what has been said be true of worship and teaching, it is equally true of all duties involved in the cure of souls. Except as men of prayer, we have no warrant for claiming or expecting a clear insight into spiritual diseases, or a skilful hand in treating them. If we are not such, we are fated to be intruders and blunderers in the affairs of souls, and the fruit of our follies and mistakes will soon be apparent in the weakness and failure of our pastorate.

The force, the reality of what has been said cannot and will not be questioned. *Theoretically* no one would think of denying it, but *practically* how does the matter stand? We may not judge one another. Every one shall give account of himself to God. But if I go no further than what seems to be the average tone and habit of the ministry, I shall be borne out by your own observation and experience, when I say that the best among us have much to repent of in their discharge of this duty. Some have neglected it because of too much devotion to the studies of the world and the flesh. Some have neglected it because too much cumbered with serving, too much absorbed in affairs, too much occupied with the external and routine activities of the holy office; and still others because the duty is irksome and themselves are wantonly careless and indolent. That we would be diligent in prayer was part of our vow at the solemn hour of Ordination. Among all vows which can be assumed in the Kingdom of Christ, this towers above them all. It follows us at every step, overshadows us every moment, repeats itself in every line of the secret diary of our private and

official life. It is nobody's pious exhortation, it is not even a bishop's admonition, it is neither, moreover, altogether the momentous demand of God's Word. It is the recorded and deliberate utterance of our own lips, at a moment, when the Church asks to know what is in our mind before conferring the gift of Orders. It is a covenant with her, and through her with Christ Himself. To break it is a crime whose woe and penalty God only can measure.

I have abstained from details, as to how much, and when, and after what rule we should pray. I have dwelt mostly upon our promise—our obligation to be diligent in prayer. Diligent! Am I asked what it is to be so? I answer in the memorable words of a pure and noble soul now in paradise: "It is not merely the giving of much time, or the stated hours and forms. There must be that full application of the heart and mind, that lifting up of the soul to God, that drawing out of the affections after Him, that cleaving of the desires to Him, that ardor and yet that patience, that humility and yet that boldness, which time cannot measure, which make long prayers seem short to him who offers them, and

short prayers, if necessity shall make them such, count as long prayers with Him who for Christ's sake receives mercifully the soul that followeth hard after Him."* For the sake of our ministry, then, and in order to quicken its holy fire, to stir up to a mightier energy its peerless gift; for the sake of souls given into our charge; for the greater increase of the Gospel's power and the Church's honor; for our own growth and the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, let us, "continuing instant in prayer," pray for the *spirit* of prayer and for the *power* to pray, for both are the gifts of God; and let us so use both the spirit and the power, when given, as to blend our poor, stammering cries with the prayers of all saints, and both with the divine pleadings before the throne of our eternal High Priest, "who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

V. I come now to speak on another topic of exceeding gravity and importance, viz., how we may kindle the Grace of Orders by the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures. The Scriptures themselves

* Bishop Wilberforce.

and the Church in her Ordinal, which may be regarded as her own formal and condensed reiteration of the mind of the Scriptures on this subject, present it with so much fulness and emphasis that, having duly recited and urged upon you their testimony, I might be charged with presumption in adding any words of my own. No one would feel this more deeply than myself, if the matter could be treated apart from the times in which we live. But it cannot be so treated, if it is to be treated to edification. It is idle to repeat what has been said by the Scriptures or the Church touching the general topic which has been proposed for consideration; unless it be with a view to show not only how far we have drifted from their requirement under the ordinary downward tendencies of human nature common to all ages of the priesthood; but also how far this drift has been helped on by tendencies more or less peculiar to our own day. It is not so much a question what the written Word and the Ordinal say, as it is how what they say affects us—our training, our temper of mind and heart, our estimate and our use of the means appointed of God for the quickening of the ministerial gift imparted to us by

the laying on of hands ; how it bears upon the circumstances in which we must exercise the holy office, and upon certain misleading influences that press upon us as silently, but as steadily and powerfully as the atmosphere we breathe. The only authorities that have any right to address us have spoken. Their witness, their counsel, their direction are before us, we know them as we know our alphabet. But, as a whole, the clergy do not as they promised they would. If so, why ? There is the question, “ Will you be diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same ? ” and there is the answer. But what, in too many cases, has come of the answer ? It is generally agreed that the clergy, as an order, are not strong in the Scriptures in the sense they once were, and if we trust the Scriptures and the Church, it is certain that no priest can be what he promised to be, what he ought to be, what he must be, if he is to do his work, unless the warp and woof of his teaching be woven of the threads and dyed in the color of God’s Word.

(1) First, then, why have the clergy in our time fallen off in the reading of the Scriptures and in

such studies as help to a knoweldge of the same? By some, I am aware, it will be denied that they have, and in support of the denial, it will be asked, when has there been a more varied and profound study of the Scriptures? When has biblical criticism commanded more attention, or drawn to itself more learning and labor than in the present generation? Has there ever been such thorough work in examining the text, in comparing the various readings, in tracing the origin and formation of the Canon, the history and the relations of the several books? What question, what doubtful point, what issue of evidence external or internal, what omission or interpolation has escaped the keen and exhaustive inquiry of the time? Has not the modern learning done so much as to cause the old learning to appear by comparison quite superficial and valueless? Have there ever been such appliances for sacred studies, or could they have been more industriously and effectively used? Has there not been such progress of late in Philology and Ethnology, and all kindred branches of knowledge as to render them, in the solution of the problems presented by the sacred writings, practically

new sciences? Surely, it will be said, the clergy cannot but have profited by both the advanced criticism, and by the new fields of inquiry which that criticism has disclosed. And if they have, what ground can there be for affirming that they have declined either in the desire or in the actual work of Scriptural study?

Now, without the slightest wish to abate the force of all that can be said in this direction, but, on the contrary, freely assenting to every reasonable claim put forth by the most ardent votary of the new learning, I am bold to affirm that, parallel with this progress, and partly as a consequence of it, a serious decline has been going on in that phase of sacred studies to which, more than to any other, the Ordinal refers. And that phase, let it be known, is the one compared with which all others are of inferior moment. We are to be diligent in reading the Scriptures and in such studies as help to a knowledge of the same. The Ordination vow binds us to do both. But both may be done in various ways and for various purposes. Thousands have done both, and yet failed of the end which the Church has in view in imposing this vow. The

Scriptures may be diligently read and studies illustrative of them be pursued with zeal, and yet only on the ground that they form one of the most, perhaps the most, interesting chapter in the religious history of the race. If the Greek and Roman literatures have their own place and value, the Hebrew certainly, in some of its characteristics, surpasses them both. Indeed, while it attracts all educated minds, it has an extraordinary fascination for some. But clearly it is not merely as a well-defined and even splendid body of literature that the Church calls upon her priests to read and study it.

Again, though she would have them duly furnished and equipped in controversial divinity, and quick to discover and repel the approaches of erroneous and false doctrine, she does not command them to read and study chiefly for this end. A sound and comprehensive theology is of great value, as providing an authorized compend of settled principles, and yet even this is not the primary ground of her requirements. She demands, rather, that we shall be diligent in the Scriptures in order that we may catch the teachings of the Holy Spirit which

underlie the Christian life in the individual soul, those utterances of inspiration which fill the heart with a sense of the need and of the gift of a personal Saviour, those revelations of the means of grace by which sinners are moved to repentance and saints are built up in an ever-increasing faith in the truth which is the power of salvation, and through that into the stature of Christ Jesus. There are various kinds and degrees of Scriptural knowledge, all of them important and, taken together, embracing every possible aid to their acquisition. But there is one kind, one degree, which no criticism, however acute and exhaustive, can give, because it is beyond the reach of any art or appliance of the intellect, and can be attained only by a deep and habitual communion with God's Word as a strictly spiritual act—a communion resting on the guidance of the Holy Ghost and on our inward likeness to the mind of Christ. So only can we pierce through the letter to the spirit, through the outward record to the inward truth, and even through the inward truth to the life of God, which is its animating soul. So only, too, can we feel the throbs and catch the rhythm of the Divine movement

through the ages from Paradise lost to Paradise regained—a movement, which, because it is one of grace, not of nature, is discernible by faith rather than by reason, a movement, moreover, of which the written Word is God's own record, sketched by prophets, evangelists, and apostles, speaking at sundry times and in divers manners, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This is the knowledge which transcends all else, no scholarship can win it. It lies beyond the range of the best critical apparatus invented by this, or any past generation. It comes of the study of forces, not of words ; of facts, not of style ; of Divine thoughts and purposes, and of the human needs which evoked them, rather than of the articles and conjunctions, the nouns and verbs through which they speak. Do not understand me as underrating the value of verbal criticism or of exegetical studies generally. I only insist that, needful as they may be in their place, there is a higher knowledge of God's word than any that they can give, a knowledge that vanishes from the attempted grasp of any purely mental process, and yields itself, as a thing of the spirit, only to a spiritual mind.

(2) And this brings me to notice the characteristic difference between the Patristic and the Modern critical handling of the Scriptures. The former was bent on getting at the inner life, the hidden soul of the Scriptures ; the latter is bent on taking to pieces, and putting together again the language in which that life, that soul, is enshrined. The former struck down to, and moved on with, the hidden current of the divine thought ; the latter anatomizes the flesh tissues and nerve threads and bone articulations that make up the channel through which that current flows. The former saw as many meanings as it could, the latter sees as few as it can. The former bored down through one stratum after another until it reached the deepest reservoirs ; the latter is content to stop with the first water it finds, and believes every spring-head the purer in proportion as it is found near the surface. With the former the letter is but the starting-point for excursions into the world behind it ; with the latter it is a sort of ratchet to the wheel of suggestion and meditation. The difference between these methods, radical as it is, is substantially the difference between two widely-sun-

dered, almost antagonistic, conceptions of the actual nature and functions of Holy Scripture—the one regarding it as a revelation of the mind of God given under supernatural conditions, and therefore not to be treated as any merely human literature may be treated ; the other regarding it practically as only one of many rival religious records, and therefore subject to precisely the same canons of interpretation as any other product of the human mind. If the latter conception be the correct one, then it is quite consistent that no attempt should be made to find any more meaning in the Scriptures, than the human mind can find in itself, or in the history of its own development.

None of the clergy, I suppose, would acquiesce in such a view unless they would be ready to admit that the Bible is God's Word only figuratively and by courtesy. Stated thus grossly, and thus nakedly outlined, it certainly would have no chance of acceptance by men who retain any respect for their vows of Ordination. But commonly it is not so presented. Like many things of like sort, it usually comes to us more or less veiled in the hazy phrases of rationalistic rhetoric, which glories in under-

mining, without shocking, the traditional faith of the simple and unwary. However disguised or diluted, it is found on every thoroughfare and in many of the by-ways of the religious thought of the time ; and, I fear, has made serious inroads upon some also who little suspect how near is the goal to which its logic will lead them. It is impossible to reckon up the causes which have drawn so many of the clergy away from the Church's requirement, and from their own promise touching the diligent reading and study of God's Word without placing this among the chief. I do not mean what is called rationalism, pure and simple, wrought out into definite method and assuming the pretension of a formal philosophy. I refer rather to a mode of biblical criticism which it has helped, directly or indirectly, to produce, and whose aim seems to be to see as little as possible, in the text, and to sneer at the Fathers, whose mode of interpretation was exactly the opposite, and for a reason which I have already given.* It seems impossible but that this bald

* In speaking of the exegetical value of Patristic Antiquity, it may be well to recall a fact familiar to every Churchman, viz., that when the Church appeals to the Ancient Fathers, she

and barren style of handling God's Word should, in all who accept it, chill their interest in sacred studies and tempt them to acquiesce in the minimum, rather than excite them to labor for the maximum, of Scripture knowledge. It is only subjects already dead, or subjects whose life is expected to

does not refer to well-known names in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas of Aquinum, but to the Fathers of the first four or five centuries, and eminently to those of *the ante-Nicene age*. It is the boast of a numerous and pretentious school of interpreters and critics that they have shaken themselves free from the *mystical method* of the early Fathers. It seems not to have occurred to them that in doing so, they have, at the same time shaken themselves free from the method of interpretation—call it *mystical*, or anything else—habitually adopted by Christ and His apostles. One cannot but remember in this connection the language of Bishop Pearson,* “*Philosophia quotidie progressu, theologia nisi regressu non crescit.*” “You who either fill the venerable office of the priesthood or intend it, and are hereafter to undertake the awful cure of souls, rid yourselves of that itch of the present age, the love of novelty. Make it your business to inquire for that which was from the beginning. Resort for counsel to the fountain-head. Have recourse to antiquity. Return to the holy Fathers. Look back to the Primitive Church. In the words of the Prophet, ‘Ask for the old paths.’”

* See Appendix C.

* Minor Works, vol. 2, p. 10.

vanish under the knife, that are fit for such an anatomy. The Patristic handling may have led off, as it did among the Alexandrian school, into many fancies and idle dreams but wherever it wrought it deepened and widened the spiritual world. This other handling, however, by its hard, technical literalism, first muddies and then dries up the very fountains of spirituality.

(3) Let me now call attention to another influence that has helped to bring into more or less disfavor the diligent reading and study of Holy Scripture. The history of sacred thought is full of reactions from extremes. The too much is followed by the too little, and the too little in turn by the too much. Just now we seem to be reacting, on the one hand, from the *too much* as regards the office of Scripture, and, on the other hand, from the *too little* as regards the office of the Church. Those are still living who can recall Christian scholars and thinkers who so elevated the written Word above all else as to be named, and with some justice, bibliolaters. They held the strongest possible doctrine of plenary Inspiration both as to the form and the sub-

stance of Revelation. They found in itself not only the sufficient witness of its genuineness and authenticity, but also in itself the sufficient, nay the complete, canon of interpretation. They declared it self-evidencing and self-explaining. Its meaning might be simple or manifold, literal or mystical; it mattered not whether it concerned prophecy or doctrine, morals or worship, discipline or history, from the most hidden sayings to the plainest precepts: one only faculty was needed to develop and expound it—private judgment, with such guidance and help as it could obtain. The consequences are too well known to require any formal reference to them here. The factor which this school left out—the living, historic, universal Church, to whose keeping and witness the written Word has been committed from the start—had to be brought forward, and its rightful, Christ-given, necessary office to be insisted upon.

But here again the equilibrium between the Word and the Church—both alike of God, both alike indispensable, both so bound together by their Author, that to sunder them is to cripple both, permanently to neglect either is to destroy the other—has been

sadly disturbed in some minds. To the cry, "The Bible, the Supreme Rule of Faith!" (which it is, properly understood); the "Scriptures all in all!" not only in the sense of their sufficiency for every human need of divine knowledge, but also in the sense that every individual believer was sufficient for their explication—to this succeeded the cry, "The Church; the living organ of God's will!" The Church whose consciousness embraces at once the contents of the Word and all besides which the Holy Ghost has imparted under the fluctuating emergencies of history! The Church the only safe guide, whether we affirm of it an *a priori* infallibility or an *a posteriori* inerrancy! The Church, which, in her Creeds and Confessions and Liturgies and Canons of discipline, gives us the essential mind of Scripture with her own varied experience of its use super-added! Why go back, it is said, to writings the latest of which are nearly two thousand years old, when we have a living voice to guide us? Why spend our days on Greek particles and tenses, when we have all we want ready at hand and duly certified by the only authority competent to speak. The voice of God, it is said, reaches us to-day under

higher conditions of certitude, through the Body of Christ, than through records which have given rise to endless disputes concerning a thousand points which, individually, we are powerless to decide. Why give laborious years to harmonizing and unifying scores of writers, even though inspired, when the truth is offered us in all its harmony of parts and unity of aim, in the testimony of a living society, which enjoys the divine promise of guidance into the way of all truth? The Scriptures have their place and use. They are to be preserved with the utmost care. They are to be revered by believers and defended against enemies. We should be familiar with their diction, because it is that which holy men chose as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We should have their precepts on our tongues, because they are sententious and sublime. We should have in our minds the connections of the books and the characteristics of each. In short, we should have all knowledge of them that can be had without laborious and painstaking scholarship, and without binding ourselves too closely to a very high notion of the Ordination vow.

I do not aim at precise definitions. I speak of a

tone of thought, a habit of mind, just now becoming more and more prevalent among priests under thirty years old, and among candidates for Holy Orders. It is, I need hardly say, the outcome of one-sided and extravagant views of the mission and functions of the Church. Just in proportion as it spreads will it make our preaching lean and flabby, our theology lop-sided and superficial, our spiritual life loose and languid, and, as a final result, our ministry an arm of power bereft of bone and sinew.

We want neither *bibliolatry* nor *ecclesiolatry*. We are to be on our guard alike against the shrinkage, the disuse, the distortion of every vehicle of God's will. If we know the Bible and the Church as we ought, we know what they are—each in itself and each to the other. It is impossible for them to antagonize, and it is equally impossible for either to supplant the other. As well say the stars are not needed because we have the sun, or the sun is of little account because we have the stars.* The

* It is our duty to be zealous for the sufficiency and supremacy of Scripture. It is our only Rule of Faith. To it every doctrine must be conformed; by it every doctrine must be tried. But we must remember that the Bible itself teaches us that

folly is apparent, the danger not so much so. It is one of the worst of the many bad fruits of unbalanced thinking and misdirected zeal on sacred subjects, that they mar or break up entirely the exquisite equilibrium of divine gifts. It would seem as though this was the least pardonable of all the disturbances of that heavenly adjustment and harmonious balance. At what a cost were the Scriptures given us as part of our inheritance? At what a cost, too, was the Church given as another part?

God has not only given the *Bible as a rule*, but has also given us the *Universal Church* to guide us in the *right use and application of the rule*. (Chr. Wordsworth's Bishop of Lincoln's Miscellanies, vol. 2, p. 93.)

Our knowledge on this subject, however confirmed and illustrated by human inquiry, comes to us, or rather is given to us, by a Divine warrant. St. Paul, in his two letters specially devoted to the instruction and guidance of the ministry—the teaching order—says first of the Church to which the Scriptures were committed: “The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* Then farther on, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished with all good works.”† The two cannot be separated from, nor confounded with, nor opposed to one another.

* 1 Timothy 3 : 15.

† 2 Timothy 3 : 16, 17.

How marvellously do they speak the one for the other? How else than as the narrowness born of ignorance and conceit shall I characterize the temper which says, on the one hand, here is the Word—I want nothing but that, it is my confession of faith, it is enough for me and I am enough for it; or, on the other, here is the Church—tell me what she says, and I care for nothing more. Surely it is not for me, in such a hearing, to point out how the Church intends us to use the summaries and compends of truth, the Creeds and Offices she puts into our hands. If they bear the stamp of her universal consent, they are of the highest authority; not merely because at certain crises in her history she has framed and published them, but, before all else, because they were originally drawn from Scripture and may now be proved thereby. They are, indeed, more than a help and convenience, as some are content to esteem them. They are absolutely necessary, if the faith of Christ is to be incorporated into a kingdom and transmitted as a continuous force in history. But whatever their need, their use, their influence, their authority, they have a hold on us because they have a yet *stronger* hold on the mind

of Christ as set forth in certain "Scriptures given by inspiration of God"—Scriptures, be it remembered, *of which Christ Himself is the interpreter*,* speaking audibly to men while he was yet in the flesh, speaking afterward and always, unto the end, by the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, in and through His own body, the Church. It is of these Creeds and Confessions and Offices that we are told, as of all other utterances claiming to be divine, "Prove all things." *It is the duty of all to attempt it; it is the duty of some to do it.* Every private Christian should do what he can to analyze his belief and resolve every article of it into the elements of which it is composed. Every official Christian is bound to

* Christ the everlasting Word, is the expounder of the written Word. He interpreted the Old Testament in person when He was on earth. He sealed it with His own seal, and delivered it as God's Word to the Church, and by the Church to the world. After His ascension He explained the meaning of the New, as well as the Old Testament, by His Spirit and His apostles. And when, after their departure, heresies arose, He declared the true meaning of Holy Scripture by Creeds and Confessions of Faith, received by His Church Universal, to which He has promised His presence even unto the end of the world." (Chr. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln's Miscellanies, vol. 2, p. 99.)

do it, and if he do it not, he violates his promise to the Church, and, if discipline could be enforced, he should be stripped of his office and sent back to the ranks.

(4) Again, we are likely to witness a declining interest in the written Word because of the special prominence given of late to the Sacramental system of the Church. This is a point of much delicacy and difficulty ; and while my own views are clear and positive, I desire to state them with the utmost care and moderation. I would warn you against a certain tendency, but I have no wish to intensify the warning by exaggerating the tendency. We are living in a time of reactions, or, some say, of transitions, from extremes produced by antecedent conditions of religious thought. If we have had too much of the subjective, the emotional, the experimental, we are now threatened with too much of their opposites. If we have had too much individualism, it is only natural that we should look for high-wrought assertions of what is corporate and organic in our Christianity. If our spiritual life, for a time, unduly depreciated the Sacraments in favor of other and less formal and outward means

of grace, the drift now is not only to restore the balance, but to overload the hitherto neglected side of the scales. I may be mistaken, but it has seemed to me that sin regarded as personal guilt, and faith and repentance regarded as the inward conditions of pardoning grace, are not now so strongly or habitually dwelt upon as the channels and seals of that grace. It is not so much what man is and what man needs, nor what God actually does, as the *way* in which He does it, the ordinances through which He specially covenants to act, that chiefly engages attention.

So the overtilled fields give way to the fallow ones, and the Church's husbandry instinctively shifts backward and forward, not only to secure the needed variety, but also the needed rotation of crops. It is idle to complain of this law of thought and life in things spiritual. God is in it as much as He is in the things affected by it. It is for us to study its metes and bounds, and, so far as we can, to save its several orbits of movement from mutual encroachment. Now, I submit to you, as men having understanding of the signs of the times, whether there is not danger, lest the constantly in-

creasing emphasis with which many of our teachers dwell upon the surpassing virtue of the spiritual food received in the Holy Eucharist shall create a partial disrelish for the spiritual food which resides in the Holy Scriptures? Are there not those among us, and a growing company too, who teach and live, pray, and practise as though it were *a settled fact that there is only one sort of feeding on Christ*—(and that a sacramental one), which can really nourish and edify the soul? Nay more, has it not come to this in some quarters, that the only really vital and efficacious approach to Christ, as our High priest and Saviour, is the approach to Him as present on the altar under the forms of the consecrated elements?

Observe, I do not question the intrinsic greatness of the gift conferred by the Sacrament, nor the dignity of the Altar, nor the virtue of what is done upon it and around it. Even Chrysostom's language about "the empurpling blood of sacrifice, and the priest standing over the sacrifice and praying, and all stained with that precious blood," are not too strong for me as picturing figuratively to the devout eye the mystery and glory and power of this

chief memorial of the crucified. But I do question the right and the truth of so presenting this Sacrament as to dwarf and obscure other and, in their time and place, equally needful means of grace. I am not willing to sanction a school of thought, or a style of ritual which, in order to magnify our Lord's presence and work in these His "creatures of bread and wine," has little, by comparison, to say of Him as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls walking in the green pastures of the written Word ; or as the one Advocate and Intercessor who gathers up our prayers and entreaties wherever we are, whether in the sanctuary, or in the desert, or on the lonely seas, or in the chamber of sickness and sorrow, and pleads them over again in the ear of the Almighty Father ; or as the Lamb of God moving among the golden candlesticks, Head over all things to His Church. It may be claimed that theoretically and as a matter of theological principle, there is no conflict between the highest conception of the nature and uses of this Sacrament and other means of grace. It may be claimed, too, as evidence of this, that other means of grace are either preparatory, or auxiliary, or supplementary to the Eucharist. In one

or the other of these ways Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Scriptures, prayer render essential service, and, rightly treated, fall into harmony of relation and unity of purpose. This may hold true in the case of carefully educated and thoroughly disciplined minds, that can keep in plain sight the entire scheme of redemption as a whole and in all its parts. But certainly it is not true of the average Christian. With most persons this remarkable and habitual exaltation of one part of the scheme tends strongly to the disparagement and ultimately to the neglect of other parts. Especially is this so when it is iterated and reiterated to believers : Come often and regularly to the Sacrament, and your chief duty is done. Christ is in that as He is in nothing else. The fulness of His grace is there, and having found Him there, you need not be solicitous to find Him elsewhere. There you have all necessary spiritual food. There and there only are the most gracious promises fulfilled, whether relating to remission of sin, or to sanctification, or to growth generally in the graces of the divine life. There you can worship as nowhere else. There you can believe and repent and pray with an efficacy and comfort assured

in nothing else. There can be no doubt, as I have alleged, that this line of teaching, when pressed so ardently and almost exclusively, does help to dwarf the current estimate and practical use of many other provisions of our religion in the mind of the average believer, and eminently that provision which asserts the preciousness of the Scriptures to a symmetrically-developed Christian life.

Our supreme want is Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. Once grafted into Him by baptism, and strengthened in confirmation by the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost, and so made partakers of His divine nature, the soul draws near and feeds on Him as its Saviour in all the various modes of His manifestation. All the blessings of redemption are from God the Father, through the incarnate Son, by the Holy Spirit, in the Church, which is Christ's body, and therefore the habitation of the Spirit. This one channel divides off into many subordinate channels. Through all the grace we need flows *freely*. Through some it flows *regularly* and by reason of special promise and appointment. Faith, repentance, charity are at once gifts of the Spirit and essential elements of spiritual life. They must be ours

before we can go to the Sacrament. So far from being the fruits, they are the forerunners of the Sacrament. For all this side of the new life there must be due provision. To say the least, it is as important as any other side of that life, and the things which God has ordained to minister to it are as needful, have as vital an efficacy, as any other thing (the Sacrament included), which He has ordained to minister to another, but not higher side of that life.

Now, the written Word is simply the Word incarnate set forth to us by the pen of inspiration—set forth too in the transcendent and unspeakable fulness of all His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King—set forth as teaching and ruling, guiding and comforting, suffering, crucified, risen, and ascended into heaven. The Sacrament, too, sets forth the incarnate Word, contains Him, if you please, after a mystical manner, offers Him in a special way as our spiritual food and sustenance. He comes to us in a visible, and vivid memorial appointed by Himself and to continue until He come again—a memorial which is the sign, the seal, the pledge of our incorporation with Him and with

all faithful people, and of the blessings that arise from such incorporation, including that of the preservation of body and soul unto everlasting life. It is a distinct and abundant, but not exclusive, channel of the blessings it conveys. At no stage of our spiritual life does the one Vine pour through it into the branches all its saving and sanctifying virtue. Assuming what will not be denied, that not only "the truth as it is in Jesus," but that Jesus Himself is in the Scriptures as well as in the Eucharist, it would be presumption in me to comment upon the comparative fulness and power with which each presents Him to Christian believers. It is enough that the conclusion be established that neither so presents Him as, in the divine intent, to interfere with, or displace the office of the other. In saying thus much, I have not meant to assert or imply that the minds, in which this drift lurks, consciously feel it or deliberately further it. It is what I deem an inevitable and harmful result of a certain tone of thought, and, sometimes, method of teaching, against which I have warned you. If I have overrated it, no one will be more glad to know it than I. I leave this branch of the subject with one more remark.

There was a long stretch of centuries in the Church's history when, owing to the practical burial or widespread oblivion of the written Word, it was only natural that believers should turn to, and be taught so to do, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the only mode of witnessing to His presence and His work. We should be thankful that such a witness survived in ages so dark with ignorance and superstition. But what was natural then is strange now, when the Word lies open to every eye that chooses to read it.

(5) I pass to another and very different phase of my subject. Among the causes helping on the decline of a devout and diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, is the multiplicity and attractiveness of the intellectual pursuits opened up by the widening fields of knowledge. New themes, and new modes of handling old themes, are constantly pressed upon our attention. Every day is adding to the stock of general truth. Inquiry is pushed in all directions, and that week is a blank which does not announce some fresh discovery. Even our ascertained knowledge in history, philosophy, physics, literature is all the while threatened with revisions and amend-

ments. No study can be named, relating to man or nature, that has not been indefinitely extended within our own generation. So true is this that most educated men despair of keeping up with the progress of all branches of knowledge, and are dropping off into specialists. Excellence is attainable no longer in all fields of inquiry, and with difficulty in any one. Scientists and *littérateurs* are prompt to announce each his special pursuit, and are not aggrieved when reminded of their ignorance of other pursuits. They are content to do some one thing well. Not only divisions, but subdivisions of labor have become an imperative necessity in our modern life. But what other vocations do freely and openly, ours timidly shrinks from doing. The average clergyman thinks it a disgrace not to be accounted as one not only well furnished in his own calling, but up to the times in all ways. He fancies that he must be a man of wide information and varied culture if he would not lose caste. He knows that a lifetime given to theology alone would be too short to compass the vast area of thought and learning over which it spreads. He knows what an inexhaustible realm is thrown open to him by the Scriptures and

the studies which help to a knowledge of the same. He knows what lies behind him, too, in sacred history. Each of these might claim the devotion of his best years and the noblest energies of his mind, and yet leave him only partially schooled in their lessons. And yet he does not face the issue as other men do, by settling down calmly and patiently to his own line. He is tempted into compromises and compromises sweep him out into shallowness. He diffuses and dilutes himself until a certain weakness overtakes him in everything. He is neither strong in the pulpit, nor strong in scholarship, nor strong in exact knowledge of anything. The pains and penalties of the smatterer dog his steps turn where he will. Now, in this profitless scattering of mental force we have an explanation of the slim attainments in sacred lore of not a few of our clergy. In attempting to grasp too much, they let slip the one sort of knowledge the want of which is inexcusable. It is unpardonable for a minister of Christ to find time for reviews and newspapers and novels and fugitive essays on a thousand topics, and it may be for the more sober and thoughtful issues of current literature, and then to plead lack of time for the

regular and diligent study of God's Word. That study and the studies affiliated with it are the solemnly enjoined, publicly declared, sacredly pledged business of his life. They must precede and, if need be, supplant and exclude all others. No side excursions can be undertaken while the main road is untravelled. To be strong in the Scriptures is the one thing needful. The promise to be so is the only one the Church exacts from us in the whole round of mental equipment, and if we fail to keep it, it matters not what reputation we may gain elsewhere. Close thinking, philosophical subtlety, wide reading, varied culture, æsthetic taste are all desirable, but they are no substitute for a devotional and critical knowledge of the one message that we are commissioned to deliver. The memories of Ordination are simply insulted by the man who prides himself on his French and German, and knows next to nothing of the tongues in which prophets and evangelists and apostles recorded the wonderful works of God.

Still further, while it would be unwise and unsafe to isolate ourselves from, or be regardless of, the main currents of thought sweeping by us—for

if we are to serve man we must know what is uppermost in his brain as well as in his heart—yet if any class toiling for his elevation have a right to be specialists that class are the clergy. They cannot be altogether students. The cloistered retreats of scholarship are not for them. As much at least as those of any other vocation, their duties are practical. A thousand things call them down from the higher walks of thought. A sick man tossing with fever in a by street, a death in the tenant house attic or in chambers painted with vermilion, a wayward member of the flock falling off into vice and wretchedness, the unrepentant and the ignorant needing to be admonished of their sins and taught the way of life, households shutting up within their walls domestic unfaithfulness, dissension, and wretchedness, weary souls seeking comfort and guidance amid life's trials, hungry souls asking to be fed, little by little, as they have time and opportunity, with the bread of life, frequent services in the sanctuary, and the orderly instruction of the assemblies of God's people—these are calls not to be put aside on the plea of quiet hours and uninterrupted studies. They are voices of God

through His suffering children, sometimes jarring and unpleasant, but always sacred, which a true priest had better himself perish than disregard. How they break in on our dreams of high thinking and our self-chosen schemes of systematic literary work! How imperatively they shut up the just-opened book that has begun to absorb us, and command us to lay down the pen at the very moment when the mind pulsates with the throbs of a long-looked-for inspiration! It is our lot to be teachers, not discoverers, to be doers rather than thinkers, to apply the truth already in hand rather than to explore new fields of truth, to represent a Master already enthroned, a kingdom already established, and to utter the finished message of the one and the completed law of the other, rather than to speculate about the possibilities of other leaderships and other empires. I say this is our lot, our vocation, our ministry. Is it too exacting and irksome? Is the path too steep or too narrow? Do flesh and blood chafe under it? There is but one answer. The one High Priest of the ages so ordered it, and He calls no man to follow Him in it to whom self is dearer than the glory of God and the gift of eternal

life to a dying world. Intellectually, then, we cannot, more than others, do all things well. It is enough that we do that well unto which we were set apart, finding in it our strength and our joy, meanwhile neither coveting nor despising other men's goods.

(6) I have now called attention to several influences more or less unfavorable to such a study of the Holy Scriptures as is required by our Ordination engagements. It remains for me to speak of another, of the prevalence of which I shall venture no opinion. I would rather speak of it as a temptation than as an actual fault, as an enemy to be watched rather than as one already within the camp. Whatever the power over us of the tendencies which have just been considered, none of them throws a doubt upon our good intentions, or questions our devotion to God's word, or impeaches our industry in acquiring the collateral knowledge which shall fit us to understand and expound it. But can I with candor stop here? Are not some of us tempted to be careless and indolent in the performance of this duty? Do all of us turn to account, as we might, the resources, and opportunities that we possess? After allowing

for the thousand distractions and hindrances that beset us, do we throw the time and labor at our command into this duty as we ought? Are our Bibles well worn with use? Have they been taken up into us and we into them by such a constant, life-giving reciprocity as will express and complete itself, sooner or later, in mutual assimilation and finally in identity of tone and purpose? Are the needed helps always at our side? Are the words ever recurring to our lips, "Open now mine eyes that I may see the wondrous things of thy law?"

Or, on the other hand, do we study the Word only as the humor takes us, or under some special urgency of preparation for the pulpit or the lecture-room, or when some inquiring parishioner crowds upon us a special difficulty or a troublesome doubt? Do we seek to be wise in the Scriptures, fully armed at every point, saturated through and through with their spirit, or are we content with not seeming to others to be ignorant of what, professionally, we are bound to know? I shall not presume to answer these questions. Each must do so for himself and to the Searcher of all hearts. But it will be no breach of charity, certainly, to say that there are

some painful proofs of negligence in this matter, which the honor of the Church, the credit of the ministry, and the good of souls call upon us to remove without stopping for explanations or apologies.

To this counsel I add another by way of caution. The most thoughtful among the clergy are the ones to be most affected by, because most sensitive to, the doubting tone of the time. Whereas, in the past generation, this or that Christian dogma was assailed, now the very records of Christianity are pushed to the front of the battle between the Church and her adversaries. I need not recount the characteristics of the several hostile schools of criticism and philosophy, nor describe their various modes of attack. The fact that they have sown beside all waters the seeds of distrust and suspicion is enough for my purpose. It is only what might be expected that all the studies of the clergy, whether exegetical, or dogmatic, or historical, should have more or less reference to this fact ; some of us hardly work out a sermon without having in mind some one of the recent doubts touching the Faith or the Scriptures. It may be that we do not overrate the prevalence of these doubts in the general mind or

in the minds of our own people, nor the importance of meeting them ; but I am quite sure that we do allow them too much influence, as well upon our own frame of mind, as upon the aim and mode in which we study God's word. Difficulties there are, and we should be ready to meet them. But it is one thing to read the Word that we may *find God's message to man*, and quite another thing to read it that we may *find answers to what man has to say against it*. Man's objection may be very serious, but God's truth is of vastly more consequence. There never was a positive that was not followed by eviscerating negatives, and it is quite possible that in our zeal to cut away the latter we may loosen our hold on the former. It is God's own law that no man is qualified to study what He has revealed unless he can first believe that a revelation has been given. God speaks to faith, and what He says can be known only by faith. This law, and no special emergency of doubt, no transient phase of human thought, no demand of unbelief on this side or that, no new criticism or philosophy, no fresh ventures of infidelity, be they English, or French, or German, or Dutch, must determine our mental attitude and

fix, as a lighthouse upon the rock, the dominant aim of our studies. Not a few active and energetic temperaments are restive under the restraints which this law imposes. They have a combative turn and enjoy the exercise of the controversial faculty in the stir and din of conflict. There is something that wakens them to unusual effort and brings into play the weapons slowly forged by years of study. Some new line of doubt, some freshly-planned assault, some startling cry of the enemy advancing to breach the walls where they seem most unprotected, is to them the coveted signal for taking down from the shelf helmet and shield and sword. If there were no dangers, no friction, no conflict, their theological life would stagnate and their vocation would be robbed of one of its dearest charms. Others, again, put forth a distinct effort to bring themselves into intellectual sympathy with assailants of the faith. Their sense of candor and fairness is gratified by imagining themselves in the place of their foes with a view to testing the strength of their position. They fancy that they must first realize the doubt, domicile it in their hearts, before they can successfully cope with it. As to know what temp-

tation is we must first be tempted, so with the doubts and difficulties of minds that they desire to lift up to the plane of faith.

Still others, again, who have, as they believe, their feet firmly poised on the truth, are moved by a certain chivalry of intellect, a sort of passion for adventure in putting the claims of faith alongside the problems of sceptical criticism. They are not willing that all the boldness and courage should be on the side of the assailing party. They are ready to take up a position, however hazardous, provided only it be outside the customary defences.

Now, with all these types of character the tendency is to drift away from habits of quiet study and tranquil meditation. They ponder the Word of Life as close thinkers and acute inquirers, but their line of thought has more to do with qualifying them to do battle *for the faith*, than with building them up *in the life which is the fruit of faith*. It is their misfortune to gather all other fruits from the Scriptures but "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Missing this, they miss what the Scriptures were intended, before all else, to yield. It may be doubted, therefore, whether the most scholarly and

gifted minds are always the ones that derive the most spiritual benefit from their own work. Some things are withheld from the wise which are revealed unto babes. A right attitude, a proper frame toward the truth as it is in Jesus, is of more consequence than great learning ; and if this be true of all believers, it is eminently so of those ordained to be pastors of the flock. For how shall they duly represent Christ unless, above and beyond all else, they have in them the mind of Christ ?

In all that has been said, it has been my purpose to deal with the hindrances to the diligent and right-minded study of the Holy Scriptures. Though often tempted to enlarge upon its attractions and advantages as well on purely intellectual, as on moral and spiritual grounds, I have thought it best to confine myself to a view of the subject that could not fail to be of practical moment, because suggested by tendencies without and by experiences within, of which, in these days of reactions and transitions in nearly all matters of religion, none of us could be ignorant. I have tried, moreover, to avoid all dogmatism of thought and language, striving above all for such candor and moderation of statement as

would commend what I have deemed it my duty to say to all who desire to think fully and fairly on this and kindred subjects.

I conclude with the words of a learned and distinguished biblical student whose soundness in the faith and earnestness of Christian living are the best evidence of the scope and spirit of his studies.

“ It is *not* merely to inform the understanding that Holy Scripture is to be read with such consummate attention and studied with such exceeding care. It is *not* for the illustration of history, or in order that it may be made a test of the value of other systems of morals ; or to render a man’s pulpit addresses attractive, or even to enable a parish priest to teach with confidence and authority, that he is entreated now ‘ to prevent the night watches,’ if need be, that he may be occupied with God’s Word, Oh no ! It is in order that his inner life may be made conformable to that outer law ; that his aims may be ennobled, and his motives purified, and his earthly hopes made consistent with the winning of an imperishable crown ! It is in order that when he wavers between right and wrong, the unutterable canon of God’s *Law* may suggest itself to him as a

constraining motive. Its aim and real function is that the fiery hour of temptation may find the Christian soldier armed with 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,' that the dark season of adversity may find his soul anchored on the Rock of Ages, which alone can prove his soul's sufficient strength and stay. Under every form of trial, under every strange vicissitude, in sickness and in perplexity and in bereavement and in the hour of death, 'Lord—to *whom* shall we go? Thou, *thou* hast the words of eternal life!' '*

* Burgon's "Inspiration and Interpretation," pp. 21, 22.



APPENDIX A.

AN at once proof and illustration of the low estate into which the dominant casuistry of the Church of Rome has fallen in these days, I cannot forbear to quote certain statements in a late work which are as true and timely, as they are trenchant.*

“The Roman Church Uncertain in Morals” is the heading under which the following appears :

“One great use of religion—in one sense the very greatest use—is to guide and govern men’s *conduct* and *morals*. It is of the utmost importance, seeing how man’s own standard of right and wrong shifts and wavers, according to the fashion of the day—as, for example, in the last century, drunkenness was popularly thought no disgrace—that the Church should have a fixed and certain rule of morals, and that rule as pure and lofty as God’s own Word. Yet the Roman Church not only has got no such

* “Plain Reasons against Joining the Church of Rome.’
By Dr. Littledale. (Pp. 10-12.)

standard now, but has actually set up one which is lower and baser and more uncertain by far than the popular one of ordinary folk who make no pretence to be religious. It has come about in this way—partly in order to make religion a very easy thing, so as to prevent man from shaking it off altogether ; but partly also to provide excuses for many evil things constantly said or done to promote the interests of Romanism itself—a system has been steadily built up called *casuistry*, for dealing with separate *cases* of sins which at any rate seem to be condemned by broad general laws of God. And this casuistry is now governed by a principle called *probabilism*, the simple meaning of which is this : That if something be plainly forbidden by God's law of morals, and you have a mind to do it, you *may* do it in the teeth, not only of the Bible, but of most of the chief writers on morals, provided you can get the opinion of one casuistical writer in your favor, even though it be plainly weaker and *less probable* than that of those who bid you obey God's law. It is just as if a man could claim acquittal of any crime he had committed, though forbidden by the laws of Great Britain, and punished scores of times over by

the courts of justice, if he would plead that he got an opinion from some tenth-rate barrister that there was no wrong-doing in it. If, as a matter of fact, a high line were taken by Roman casuists on moral questions, perhaps no great practical harm could be done by this theory ; but there is hardly any sin, however heinous, for which they do not find excuses. And the chief authority on morals now in the Roman Church is St. Alfonso Liguori, whose teaching *all Roman Catholic confessors are now bound to follow in the confessional*, since he has been raised to the rank of a ‘ Doctor of the Church.’

“ As a saint, according to the Roman doctrine, there can be no error in his writings, but as a doctor, not only is there no error in his writings, but it is necessary to submit to his teachings. (Benedict XIV., “ De Canonizatione,” iv. 2 ; xi. 11.) Now, he says, for example : (1) That the actual assassins of a man are not equally guilty with their instigator, whom he admits to incur excommunication (“ Theol. Moral.” iv. 364) ; (2) That if A murder B, in order that C may be suspected of the murder, and thereby suffer loss of any kind, A is not bound to make C any compensation unless he be a ‘ worthy person ’ (iv.

587); (3) That if a clerical adulterer be caught by the husband, he may lawfully kill the husband, and does not incur 'irregularity' thereby, provided his visit was secret, so that he had a reasonable expectation of escaping detection; though, if he have openly braved the danger, he does incur 'irregularity' (iv. 398); (4) That an adulteress may deny her sin on oath, either by saying that she has not broken the marriage tie (since adultery does not void it), or, if she have gone to confession, that she is innocent of the sin because it has been washed away in confession; or, again, that she has not committed it, *i. e.*, so as to be bound to acknowledge it (iv. 162); (5) That a man may swear aloud to any false statement, provided he add some true circumstances in an undertone, unheard by the bystanders (v. 168); (6) That it is lawful to swear to a quibble or to perjure one's self before a judge, if any great loss or inconvenience would follow to a witness from speaking the truth (iv. 151-6); (7) That a nobleman ashamed to beg or work, may steal to supply his needs if he be poor (iv. 520).

“Further, Liguori republished as a text-book and dedicated to Pope Benedict XIV., the ‘Marrow of

Moral Theology,' by Busenbaum, the Jesuit, from which the following maxims are taken :

“(1) A very poor man may steal what is necessary for the relief of his own want ; and what a man may steal for himself, he may also steal for any other very destitute person ; (2) Any one trying to prevent such a theft may be lawfully killed by the thief (Tom. iii. lib. iii. par 1, Tract 5, c. 1).

“Escobar, another famous casuist, lays down that a member of a religious order who lays aside his habit for a short time, in order to commit some sin undetected, does not sin heinously nor incur excommunication (Theol. Moral. I. xlv. 213).

“These are only,” adds the writer, “a very few examples out of many affecting every one of the moral commandments.”

APPENDIX B.

IN a note, page 10, stating the powers and functions of the priesthood, that relating to the remitting of sins was included, together with a brief reference to the several authorized methods of exercising this power, the last named of which was Absolution. This, with its immediately affiliated topics, has, of late years, and for reasons known to all, been pushed into great prominence in all discussions touching the powers of the priesthood and the discipline of the Church. The time has come when it is imperatively necessary for the clergy to displace vague impressions and crude or uncertain opinions on it by definite and positive convictions, resting upon the mind of Scripture as interpreted and practised by this branch of the Catholic Church. It is impossible to thrust it aside ; indifferent we cannot be. Whatever a particular school may hold, and whatever may be the doubt lingering in some minds in regard to it, there is no question as to the

attitude or the testimony of this Church concerning it, so far as they are capable of authoritative definition, apart from the action of a duly called and duly organized synod of the whole Anglo-American Church. Only less than the formal authority of such a body was that of the late Lambeth Conference (1878), composed of Archbishops, bishops Metropolitan, and other bishops of the Holy Catholic Church, in full communion with the Church of England, one hundred in number, all exercising superintendence over dioceses or lawfully commissioned to exercise episcopal functions therein, many of them from the most distant parts of the earth, and assembled under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Conference, among other important acts, put upon record and published to the Church with a unanimous approval, the following declaration which, in covering the subject of Confession, covers also, by necessary inference, that of Absolution, for the view of Confession which it condemns has neither force nor relevancy except as it is connected with a corresponding view of Absolution.

(1) It affirmed "that in the matter of Confession

the Churches of the Anglican Communion hold fast those principles which are set forth in the Holy Scriptures, which were professed by the Primitive Church, and which were reaffirmed at the English Reformation.

(2) “ That no minister of the Church is authorized to require from those who may resort to him to open their grief a particular or detailed enumeration of all their sins ; to require private confession previous to receiving the Holy Communion ; or to enjoin or even encourage the practice of habitual confession to a priest ; or to teach that such practice of habitual confession, or the being subject to what has been termed the direction of a priest, is a condition of attaining to the highest spiritual life.

(3) “ That at the same time they are not to be understood as desiring to limit in any way the provision made in the Book of Common Prayer, for the relief of troubled consciences.”

It would seem impossible to use plainer or stronger language. When this declaration was put forth, it was expected that it would provoke criticism and dissent among those whose teaching and practice were rebuked with so much emphasis, but

it was not expected that any attempt would be made to evade or explain it away. And yet such attempts have been made and with a boldness and assurance simply astounding.

Having given the Declaration of the Conference, I think it well to give the grounds on which it was based, and I shall do this in the admirable words of Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, who is not more renowned for his learning than for his soundness in the faith. I do not mean that what follows was actually presented to the Conference and formally adopted by it, but merely that it states with substantial correctness the views held by ninety-five hundredths of those whose names were signed to the letter of which the above declaration formed a part.

It will be observed that the Bishop introduces what he has to say on Confession with some general observations on Absolution.

“ Unhappily the forms of public absolution, in the Church of England, are now undervalued by some, on two pleas ;

(1) Because they are *declaratory and precatory*, that is, because in them the priest *declares and pro-*

nounces forgiveness in God's name, and for Christ's sake, as in the daily office ; or because (as in the Communion Service) he *prays* for the bestowal of pardon from God on those who have confessed their sins, but does not say "*I absolve thee from thy sins,*" and because in their opinion (as in that of the Trent Council*) the principal force of the form of what the Church of Rome calls the Sacrament of Penance consists in the use of those words, "*Ego absolvo te,*" and because consequently the use of *that* form is necessary ; and further.

(2) Because the above words of absolution are spoken *in public* to many persons confessing their sins to God, and not *in private* to one singly confessing his sins to the priest.

With regard to the first of these reasons we may reply, that, *if* it had any weight, there was no absolution of sins pronounced in the Church for eleven hundred years after Christ, inasmuch as it is unquestionable *that all the forms* of absolution used in the Church during that time were *declaratory*†

* Concil. Tridentin. Sess. xiv. cap. 3, and Thomas Aquinas, Summa, Pars iii. qu. 84 ; cp. Hooker, VI. iv. 3.

† Peter Lombard, one of the greatest Roman Catholic

or *precatory*, and the form, "*I absolve thee*" (although an allowable form* when rightly applied), was *not used till the eleventh century* after Christ, and has not been used in the Greek Church to this day.

divines and schoolmen of the twelfth century, the scholar of St. Bernard, and professor of theology at Paris, afterward bishop there (A.D. 1160), and commonly called the "Master of the Sentences," affirmed that all forms of absolution were in fact *declaratory*. (See the remarkable words in his "*Libri Sententiarum*," Lib. iv., Distinct. 18, p. 375, ed. Paris, 1841.) He thus speaks: "It is evident from what has been said, that God himself releases the penitent from liability to punishment; and he releases him then when he enlightens his soul and gives him true contrition of heart. Therefore, he is not loosed from everlasting wrath by the priest to whom he confesses his sin, but he is already loosed by God, to whom he has made his confession." And Peter Lombard then quotes St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome to the same effect; and compares the work of absolution to the raising of Lazarus from the grave. Lazarus was raised by Christ, who afterward commanded his disciples to loose him from his grave-clothes, and let him go. (John 11:44.) So it is with the penitent. And (following St. Jerome in his note on Matt. 16) he illustrates it by the act of the Levitical priest, who declared the leper to be clean, and to be restored to communion with the people of God; but the act of healing was the act of God, and of God alone; and "God regards not so much the sentence of the priest as the heart and life of the penitent."

* See Bingham, xix. ii. 6.

This is acknowledged by the most learned divines of the Church of Rome herself,* and has been shown at large by our own writers.†

The second allegation is, that the virtue of absolution consists in the *private exercise* of the priestly office on the souls of individuals in the Confessional ; and that our Lord's words had special reference to that exercise.

This, then, brings us to examine the question of *private* confession.

What is to be said concerning it ?

First, let it not be supposed ‡ that we would disparage that sober and comforting use of “ the ministry of reconciliation,” § which Holy Scripture and

* *E.g.*, Morinus, “ De Penitentiâ,” lib. viii. c. 8. The work of Thomas Aquinas in defence of that form may be seen in his works, vol. xix. p. 176, ed. Venet. 1787.

† *E.g.* Abp. Ussher, “ Answer to a Jesuit,” p. 89 ; see also Bp. Fell in his edition of St. Cyprian, “ De Lapsis,” p. 136 ; and Marshall in his learned work on the “ Penitential Discipline of the Ancient Church,” chap. iii. sect. iv. ; Bingham, “ Antiquities,” xix. ii., and vol. viii. p. 450-454.

‡ Some sentences which follow have been printed by the author in the Twelve Addresses delivered at his visitation in 1873.

§ 2·Cor. 5 : 18.

the Primitive Church sanction, and which the Church of England commends to her children, in special cases, in the Exhortation to the Holy Communion, and in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick.* We do not forget that our best divines have recommended it, in certain circumstances, and under certain conditions,† and that the most celebrated foreign Reformers, Calvin, Beza, and the authors of the Lutheran "Confession,"‡ have done the same. On the contrary, we feel persuaded that in this as in other matters, the *abuse* of what in special cases and under certain restrictions is good and wholesome, holy and wise, has created a prejudice against the *use* of it.

The Church of England, in her Exhortation to the Holy Communion, recommends private confession of sin to those of her children who "cannot otherwise quiet their own consciences, but require

* Compare Hooker, VI. iv. 6 and 15.

† *E.g.*, Bp. Jewel, "Apol.," p. 158, ed. 1611; Hooker, VI. vi. 5, especially Ridley, "Life of Bishop Ridley," pp. 136, 145, 153, 236, 336, 578.

‡ Calvin, "Institut.," iv. c. 1; Beza, Homil. 16, in "Hist. Resurrect.," p. 394, 395; "Confessio Augustan.," Art. xi. xii. Chemnit. Con. Trid. pp. 373, 394.

further comfort and counsel." And in her Office for the Visitation of the Sick she says that if the sick person feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, he is to be moved by the priest to make a special confession of his sins.

The reasons why she does this in the former of these two special cases are clearly stated by herself, in that Exhortation ; and the causes why she does it in the latter are declared by Hooker,* as follows : " They who during life and health are never destitute of ways to elude repentance, do, notwithstanding, oftentimes when their last hour draweth on, both feel that sting which before lay dead in them, and also thirst after such helps as have been always till then unsavory. . . . Yea, because to countervail the fault of delay, there are in the latest repentance, oftentimes, the surest tokens of sincere dealing, therefore, upon special confession made to the minister of God, he presently absolveth, *in this case*, the sick party from all his sins by that authority which Jesus Christ hath committed to him." But surely, to infer from these two exceptional cases that the Church of England

* Hooker, VI. iv. 5.

authorizes her ministers to recommend private confession as a regular practice is strangely to pervert her words, and to affirm that she intends her clergy to feed her children with medicines which she has provided for the sick.

Again, she exhorts those who are troubled in mind, and who cannot quiet their own consciences, to resort “to some *discreet and learned* minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God’s Holy Word he may have the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.” But some among us would invert this order; they would constrain the people of a parish to come habitually and confess to their minister, who may be some youthful priest, perhaps neither learned nor discreet, and who may be more able to create scruples and doubtfulness in the minds of others than to quiet them by the ministry of God’s Holy Word. And some would persuade us that the solemn words of our Blessed Lord, pronounced at the Ordination of Priests at the laying on of hands, have been spoken to little purpose unless the newly-made priest ap-

plies himself at once to exercise his ministry by hearing private confessions and by pronouncing private absolutions.

The Church of Rome wisely requires that a person who undertakes the difficult and responsible office of hearing confessions should be eminent in theological science, learning, and wisdom.*

This is a grave and serious matter. In the med-

* See the Trent Catechism, pt. ii. cap.v. qu. 49, where this rule is laid down, "Ut hujus sacramenti minister tum scientiâ et eruditione tum prudentiâ præditus sit. Judicis enim et medici simul personam gerit. Ex quo poterunt fideles intelligere, cuivis maximo studio curandum esse, ut eum sibi sacerdotem eligat, quem vitæ integritas, doctrina, prudens judicium, commendet, qui, quæ cuique sceleri pœna conveniat, et qui vel solvendi vel ligandi sint, optime noverit." Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, in his "Monita ad Confessores" of his diocese, thus writes: "Let no secular or regular priest presume to minister the sacrament of penance (in this diocese) unless he has first obtained from us a written license and faculty to do so, as the Council of Trent prescribes; otherwise he will have incurred excommunication *ipso facto*." It would be well if priests of the Church of England, who are eager to constrain others to come to them for confession, would carefully read these "Monita ad Confessores" of one of the wisest and holiest bishops of the Church of Rome. In the Greek Church (says Dr. Covel on the "Greek Church," p. 252), "a confessor ought to be a most expert casuist, and be at least forty years old.

ical treatment of our perishable bodies, quackery is punishable by law. Surely, spiritual empiricism, which may jeopardize the health of immortal souls, ought not to escape scot-free. The physician of the body is not allowed to write a prescription without having obtained a diploma ; and shall any one venture to undertake the office of a penitentiary in the Church of God, without being duly qualified and authorized to do so? Heaven forbid ! I confess that when I think of devout persons, especially young women of ardent affections and delicate sensibilities, being invited, and almost constrained, perhaps, by some youthful priest, to resort habitually to private confession, I shudder at the thought. By so doing, instead of looking up to God as their loving Father, having His ear open to their prayers, and ever ready to receive them on their faith and repentance, as His dear children in Christ, they are led to look to a man, and to seek comfort and forgiveness of him. They put themselves under his dominion, and thus submit their will, reason, and conscience to him, and rob Christ of themselves, whom He has purchased with His own Blood.*

* 1 Cor. 6 : 20 ; 7 : 23. Gal. 5 : 1.

And further, by being tempted to brood over their own spiritual sensations, emotions, and symptoms, and to talk or write of them to their chosen spiritual guides, they are in danger of acquiring an egotistical spirit of self-consciousness, and of morbid and hypochondriacal sentimentalism, and to lose that healthful vigor and genuine freshness and holy beauty of soul which are produced and cherished by direct communion with God, and by looking upward to Him, and by losing self in adoration of Him, and in zeal for His glory, and in love for His presence in the heart—which is the life of angels. I shrink from the thought of the anatomical dissection of consciences to which such votaries are required to submit, and from that long catalogue of interrogatories which may be seen in some “Manuals of Confession”—as taught and practised by the Church of Rome*—and which are an outrage against purity, modesty, and virtue.

It is earnestly to be hoped, for reasons such as these, that the desires and intentions of some persons to introduce the practice of private confession

* *E.g.*, that of Peter Dens.

into English schools, public and private, may never be realized.

But let the clergy be exhorted to cultivate habits of personal intercourse with their parishioners, especially the young, in preparing them for *Confirmation*, and as members of *communicant classes*. And let them urge upon them the importance and necessity of regular *self-examination*; and for this purpose let them recommend to each of them some good manual of self-examination, such as may be found in Bishop Ken's "Exposition of the Church Catechism."

Private confession is exacted by the Church of Rome, which has converted penance into a sacrament; and she, by requiring private confession as a prerequisite to the Holy Communion, places one sacrament, made by herself, as a bar to the reception of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, instituted by Christ.* And whereas the Holy Spirit says, by St. Paul, "Let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that

* "Concil. Lateran." IV. A.D. 1215, can. 21; "Concil. Trident.," Sess. xiii, cap. 7, can. 11; "Catechism. Rom.," Part II., cap. iv. qu. 43. Cp. Hooker, VI. iv. 3.

cup,"* she says, "Let a man confess to a priest and submit himself to be examined by a priest, and so let him come to Communion ;" and also, whereas St. John † says, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," she ventures to say that it is necessary to resort to the human minister in order to obtain pardon from God, whose servant he is. And confession in the Church of Rome is not so much a voluntary unburdening of sorrow on the part of the penitent, as an inquisitorial scrutiny of the penitent on the part of the priest.

Holy Scripture speaks much concerning the duty of repentance, but in no case does it require confession, as a matter of necessity, to any one but God.

The examples of acknowledgments of sin which are mentioned in the New Testament as being made *to men* are either public avowals of public sin, as that of those who came to St. John's Baptism, ‡ and of the men at Ephesus, § and of St. Paul at Jerusalem, for his share in the death of St. Stephen, ||

* 1 Cor. 11 : 23.

† 1 John 1 : 9.

‡ Matt. 3 : 6.

§ Acts 19 : 18.

|| Acts 22 : 20.

or else they were confessions of wrong done to a brother, and with a petition for pardon from him, as those specified by St. James.* To cite again the words of Richard Hooker :† “ There are men that would seem to honor Antiquity, and none more to depend on the reverend judgment thereof. I dare boldly affirm that for many hundred years after Christ, the Fathers held no such opinion concerning our Saviour’s words, ‘ Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained ’ (John 20 : 23) ; they did not gather by our Saviour’s words any such necessity of seeking the priest’s absolution from sin by secret and (as they now term it) sacramental confession ; public confession they thought necessary by way of discipline, not private confession as in the nature of a sacrament, necessary.” Again, he says, (VI. 4 : 14) : “ In the times of the Holy Fathers it was *not* the faith and doctrine of God’s Church, as it is of the Papacy at the present time, (1) that the only remedy for sin after baptism is sacramental penitency ; (2) that confession in secret is an essential part thereof ; (3) that God himself cannot now for-

* James 5 : 14, 16.

† Hooker, VI. iv. 6.

give sin without the priest ; (4) that because forgiveness at the hands of the priest must arise from confession in the offenders, therefore confession unto him is a matter of such necessity as being not, either in deed or at the least in desire, performed, excludeth utterly from all pardon. No, no ; these opinions have youth in their countenance. Antiquity knew them not ; it never thought or dreamed of them.”

Public confession is recommended to penitents by Tertullian* and by Cyprian† and St. Ambrose,‡ with a view of obtaining the benefit of the prayers of the Church. In the third century, as it seems,§ in order to obviate the scandals that arose “from the multitude of public penitents,” the Greek Church appointed some one presbyter to be a penitentiary in each church, to receive voluntary confessions in private, with a view to public penance, if

* Tertullian, “*De Pœnitent.*,” c. 9 and c. 10 ; Bingham, Book VII. chap. iii.

† St. Cyprian, “*De Lapsis*,” c. 14

‡ St. Ambrose, “*De Pœnitentia*,” ii. 7 ; *Quid vereris apud bonum Dominum tuas iniquitates fateri?* and ii. 10, *Fleat pro te Mater Ecclesia ; amat Christus ut pro uno multi rogent.*

§ See Mr. Keble on Hooker, VI. iv. 9.

requisite, and consequent absolution by the bishop. But this office was abolished by Nectarius, Patriarch of Constantinople, at the end of the fourth century,* and the successor of Nectarius, St. Chrysostom, in several places gives as his counsel to penitents to confess their sins to God; but disclaims any desire of making them confess to man.† Let the reader refer to the testimonies collected by Bingham on this subject.‡ At that time, confession of secret sins to God alone was the practice of the Church.§ Public offenders were put to public penance, but the confession of secret sins

* Socrates, H. E., v. 19; Sozomen vii. 16. Cp. Hooker, VI. iv.

† St. Chrysostom, "Homil." xxxi. "Epist. ad Hebræos," tom. xii. p. 289, ed. Montfaucon, and "De Incomprehensibili Dei naturâ," Homil. v. sec. 7, tom. i. p. 490, where he says, "I do not lead thee into a theatre of thy fellow-servants, or compel thee to reveal thy sins to men; unfold thy conscience before God, and show thy wounds to him, and beseech him to heal them."

‡ Cp. Bingham, Book XV. chap. viii. sec. 6, and Book XVIII. chap. iii.

§ See Bingham, chap. iii., and Marshall's "Penitential Discipline," chap. ii. sec. i. p. 43, ed. Oxford, 1844.

was left to the discretion and conscience of those who committed them.*

Indeed, if private confession and private absolution were, as some allege, necessary to the spiritual health of the soul, it must be acknowledged that the Church of God was in a state of spiritual sickness from the time of the Holy Apostles for 1200 years ; for it *was not till the year after Christ 1215 that private confession was made obligatory even by the Church of Rome,† and then only once a year.*

And now, let me say a few words in conclusion.

In the controversies on this subject which now agitate the minds of many among us, let us endeavor, with God's help, to cherish a spirit of calmness and of love. In the strifes of earth, let us lift up our hearts to the peace of heaven. Let us praise God for the blessings He has bestowed on us in the Church of England, where we enjoy, by His

* Marshall, p. 44. Bingham, Book XV. chap. viii. sec. 6.

† At the Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 21, Concil. ed. Labbe, xi. p. 172. That private confession was not enforced in the twelfth century is clear from the words of Gratian, in Jus Canonicum, " Dist. de Pœnitentiâ," c. 79.

mercy, all things necessary for our growth in grace on earth and for the attainment of everlasting glory in heaven. Let us bless Him for the wisdom He has given to the Church of England to pursue a middle course between two opposite extremes.

On the one side, let us shun the error of those who do wrong to Him, and injure their own souls and those of others, by scorning those spiritual comforts which He offers by the ministry of the Christian priesthood, deriving its authority from Christ, who breathed on the Apostles and said, "Receive the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them."

On the other side, let us avoid the dangerous delusion of those who do dishonor to God and to Christ, and restrain and curtail His free grace and mercy to the wounded and bleeding soul, by teaching that there is no remedy for mortal sin after baptism but by "the Sacrament of Penance"; and that no contrition of the heart, and no confession of the lips, are of any avail, without the intervention of a spiritual guide; and that no reparation of wrong, no amendment of life, no works of piety and mercy, no fasting, no almsgiving, are of use

to the penitent, except imposed by a confessor ; and who bind all men upon pain of everlasting condemnation to make private confession of every great offence that they know and remember that they have ever committed against God, and who affirm that He will never pardon our sins unless we first reveal them to a priest, or earnestly desire to do so.*

Of these two errors, that which I have just described has, by an excess of reaction common in human affairs, produced the former. If, therefore, we are desirous for the sake of Christ and of His Church, that the Christian priesthood should receive due honor from the people, let us beware of claiming more for it than has been granted to it by Christ, lest by lording it over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5 : 3) we forfeit the reverence of those whose love is a precious talent entrusted to us by Him.

* See "Concil. Tridentin.," Sess. xiv. chap. 1-9 ; "De Sacramento Pœnitentiæ;" Bellarmine lib. iv. "De Pœnitentiâ," tom. iii. ed. 1615, pp. 376-482, especially lib. iii. p. 435, where he says that "no one who has sinned after baptism can be restored without the ministry of the priest." Perrone, "De Pœnitentiâ," pp. 344-354, ed. Paris, 1842. Cp. Hooker, VI. vi. Bingham, vol. iii. p. 422.

The *gift* of pardon for sin is from *God alone*. But the *assurance* of the bestowal of the gift is conveyed to us by the ministry of the priesthood ; the act of which, in pronouncing absolution, is a proof to us of the reality of the gift, because the ministry of the priesthood was instituted and appointed by Christ, and is commissioned by Him to certify us of the fact of the gift. The act of the Priest or bishop, *standing up* in the congregation, while we are kneeling on our knees, and in *that* attitude of authority pronouncing absolution and invoking God's pardon upon us, in the name of God, " who hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins," is like a royal seal and authentic sign-manual attached to a reprieve, brought by a royal officer and delegate to a penitent criminal, and assuring him of pardon from his sovereign."*

* Bishop of Lincoln's Miscellanies.

APPENDIX C.

I HAVE, in general terms, contrasted the Mystical and Patristic with the Modern or Literal method of biblical interpretation. The subject demands a more particular treatment. It is, indeed, surprising, when we consider its grave importance, how little attention it has excited of late years among even the most vigilant observers of the religious and theological symptoms of the times. The two methods have their root and ground in widely-sundered views of the rules of biblical interpretation, as well as of the fundamental canons of theology. The ancient method is deductive and inductive, the modern inductive; the ancient method accepts the faith as a completed thing from the start, and regards theological science as performing its highest function when it commits itself to the task of handing on the Catholic tradition of revealed truth, and of ascertaining the fidelity with which that tradition has been transmitted unchanged from age to age.

The modern method, on the other hand, treats the faith as practically a progressive science, and as capable of indefinite improvement—as beginning in crude imperfection and as gradually evolving itself into completeness under the conditions and with the helps of human thought ; and by necessary consequence it conceives of Holy Scripture as not only containing the subject-matter of a formulated faith, but as emerging more and more out of the shadows of past errors of interpretation, and, as it does so, ministering to the advance of theological science, and compelling more or less radical modifications in the current statement and formulation of the essentials of the faith. It cannot be denied that the Sacred Record itself affirms that the faith was once and forever delivered, and that, as so delivered, the people of God are exhorted not only to profess but earnestly contend for it. And yet, somehow, the modern method does not deem it inconsistent with this fact to insist that the faith includes within itself the possibilities of indefinite improvement, and hence of indefinite change.

Again, the ancient method relied largely upon the testimony of the Church to the meaning of the

Scriptures, and accepted as its supreme canon of interpretation "the analogy of faith"—a pervading unity in God's Word to which all particular expositions of the Word must be conformed. There was, it believed, a continuous witness, an incorporated, organic voice of the body of Christ, from which no individual interpreter of the Word was at liberty to depart. The modern rule, on the other hand, if it does not reject this voice of the whole Body, at least subordinates it to the mind of the individual expositor. By this ruling every critic renounces his prerogatives who does not bear himself as though he were a sufficient rule in himself.

Thus, these methods are radically opposed to one another :

(1) In their conception of the Church in its relations to the Scriptures.

(2) In their conception of the ancient creeds as the formal and systematic expression of the mind of the Scriptures.

(3) In their estimate of the authority of the individual judgment upon the teaching of the Scriptures.

(4) In their view of the process, whether deductive or inductive, by which the fundamentals of

Christianity are to be discovered in and elaborated out of the Scriptures.

(5) (And this is the difference now especially under consideration), the two methods are opposed in their conception of the Word of God itself—the one insisting that besides the literal, it has often an occult or mystical meaning; the other that it has but one sense and that the literal one.

(6) As an inevitable logical as well as exegetical result of these characteristic differences, the ancient method rests on the assumption that the Word of God is in essence and form *the* Word of God, and hence that it is not to be handled as any other book may be; that as the work of the Holy Spirit, it has attributes peculiar to itself, and that these attributes must be admitted and duly respected by any and all criticism that hopes to do it justice; whereas, the modern, while admitting, in a somewhat general way, that such is its character, claims that we cannot deal justly and truthfully with it unless we hold it to be amenable to precisely the same rules and appliances of interpretation which are applicable to the pages of Homer and Cicero.

So much by way of general and prefatory statement, before entering upon the particular questions now to be discussed.

Historically, the Patristic or Mystical method has held a large place in the mind of the Church and exercised a powerful influence over its theology, its worship, and its life. This is undeniable. But the issue now raised at the very threshold of the subject, obliges us to ask whether it has any place in *reason* as well as in history. Has it a philosophy, a *rationale* behind it? Or, is it at once a creature and a delusion of the imagination? Certainly, by the modern school it is accounted at once a folly and an impertinence; and the fact that it held sway so long is cited as only another evidence of the patient serenity of the human intellect when once brought under the domination of established errors. That I may do no injustice to the general attitude, or to the characteristic utterances of this school, let me quote its own language.

It is now more than twenty years ago since "Essays and Reviews" appeared—a volume which, coming as it did, from seven well-known clergymen of the Church of England, shocked the conscience

and puzzled the common sense of English-speaking Christians throughout the world. It is now partially forgotten, or, at any rate, seldom recalled, and chiefly for the reason that it has been supplanted by the more advanced and honest scepticism of to-day, of which, in the Anglican Communion, it was the half disguised and crafty *avant courier*. Though many, at the time it appeared, could not persuade themselves or be persuaded of its mischievous character, there were others, who had already sunk to a lower depth of unbelief, that did see and expose it. The *Westminster Review*, No. 34, in an able and trenchant article on "New Christianity," declares that this work had "discarded in their ordinary, if not plain, sense, the Word of God, the creation, the fall, the redemption, justification, regeneration, and salvation; miracles, inspiration, prophecy, heaven, and hell, eternal punishment and a day of judgment, creeds, liturgies, and articles, the truth of Jewish history and of Gospel narrative; leaving a doubt even as to the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension, the divinity of the Second Person, and the personality of the Third." "It may be," says the article, "that this is a *true*

view of Christianity ; but we insist, in the name of common-sense, that it is a *new* view. Surely, it is a waste of time to argue that it is agreeable to Scripture." And further : " That of all recent adaptations [of Christianity to science] it is at once the most able, the most earnest, and the most *suicidal*." Taking up the volume to-day, and with a knowledge of the effect it has produced, certainly there is no reason for altering this verdict.

Very appropriately, the most noteworthy writer (Professor Jowett) in the volume chose for himself the most noteworthy theme, *i.e.*, " The Interpretation of Scripture," involving as it did the question of inspiration, and hence that of the authority, meaning, and value of the Word of God. No impartial mind can examine this essay without being forced to the conclusion that in effect, if not in design, it is an artfully and elaborately constructed denial of inspiration. With this view, and with this only, its most significant and pivotal statements harmonize. Let us see what some of these are.

In one brief sentence, " Interpret the Scripture like any other book," he lays down the fundamental

rule which governs his method of criticism ; and if we examine what he proposes and the practical application of this rule, we find that the Scripture is to be so interpreted because it is like any other book. The rule does not refer so much to the qualities of candor, honesty, logical consistency, and exact thoroughness which ought to be exercised in criticising any other book, but to the alleged fact that there is no radical difference between the Bible and other books.

“The true glory and note of Divinity in these [Scriptures] is *not* that they have hidden, mysterious, or double meanings, but a *simple and universal* one, which is beyond them and will *survive* them.” “The Scripture has *one and only one true meaning.*” “To attribute to St. Paul or the Twelve the abstract notion of Christian truth which afterward sprang up in the Catholic Church . . . is the same error as to attribute to Homer the ideas of Thales or Heraclitus, or to Thales the more developed principles of Aristotle and Plato.” No recognition is made of the fact that inspiration in St. Paul and the Twelve, and the want of it in the others, creates a difference between them, and ac-

counts for a knowledge in the former which could not be looked for in the latter.

“The old” explanations of Scripture “are no longer tenable. They belong to a way of thinking and speaking which was once diffused over the world, but has now passed away. And what we give up as a general principle, we shall find it impossible to maintain partially, *e.g.*, in the types of the Mosaic Law, and the double meanings of prophecy, at least in any sense in which it is not equally applicable to *all deep and suggestive writings.*” It is implied, moreover, that as the Scriptures have but *one sense, and that a simple and universal one*, there neither is, nor ought to be any more difficulty in interpreting them, than in interpreting the pages of Sophocles or Plato.

Now, it may be said that Professor Jowett is an advanced thinker, a concealed or a partially avowed rationalist, that as such he takes unwarrantable liberties with Scripture and with the modern method of handling it, and therefore that he cannot be accepted as a fair expounder of *the literal, one-sense rule*. Let us, then, recede from the extreme limits on which he plants himself, and quote the language of

one on this side the water, who occupies a position of influence among us, and adorns that position by his admitted scholarship and ability.

The *Princeton Review*, July number, 1879, contains a carefully-written article "On the Aim and Influence of Modern Biblical Criticism." A few quotations will sufficiently indicate its drift and, generally, the author's theory. Biblical criticism is treated as one of the departments of human knowledge, subject to the same law of growth as other sciences, and having its several stages of progress, from a crude beginning to its present comparative perfection, distinctly marked by successive eras of discovery and scholarship. He concedes to the earliest Fathers of the Church who sat at the feet of the Apostles considerable spiritual insight, but owing to their entire lack of critical knowledge, regards them as entitled to little consideration. They had not the means of knowing the Word which they handled, and hence were quite excusable for their ignorance. That they should have been betrayed into many crudities and follies of interpretation was only what was to be expected in view of their prox-

imity to the inspired, apostolic expounders of the Scriptures. That the mystical method had its origin in the time of those expounders is reason enough for its untrustworthiness. "It is true that all the fathers were not such mystics in their exposition as Origen, yet all held the same idea of the Scriptures." But inasmuch as "the simplest laws of knowledge are always the latest," "as alchemy must precede chemistry, and astronomy must grope its way through the fancies of the astrologer," so the mystical, patristic method naturally preceded the modern, *literal, one-sense* method which is to usher in (if itself be not that already) the true and perfected science of interpretation. Again, as if to leave no possible doubt as to his meaning, this writer says: "As biblical scholars all [the early Christian writers] were simply of a time when true criticism was hardly known," "we may *excuse* the early methods of the Fathers; but it is astonishing to-day, when a Christian scholar forces on the Word of God that style of exposition. Criticism can admit no such mystical canon." He quotes with admiring approval what he calls the true principle as announced by Tyndall, "Understand that Scrip-

ture hath but one sense, and that the literal sense." Our Anglican divines fall under his condemnation because they taught and wrote after "the mystical canon," and not after Tyndall's "*one-sense*" canon. He objects to "a Christology built out of any plain Psalm of David or any rite of the temple worship." He rejects also without qualification the *analogia fidei* as having any authority over the science of interpretation. No one who would do his work well as a critic must allow any pre-established dogmas, *i.e.*, any creed, whether that of the Apostles or that of Nicea to regulate his judgment or modify his conclusions. It should be added, that, unlike Professor Jowett, this writer distinctly affirms the divine and supernatural character of the Scriptures, and admits "typical features in the Hebrew worship and prophetic passages which clearly point to the Christ of the New Covenant"—admits, in fact, the existence of a Scripture typology, and this in spite of the Tyndall "*one-sense, literal*" canon.

It is quite likely that this writer would not care to accept any sponsorship for Professor Jowett's opinions; and that, in not a few things connected with

theology and sacred criticism, the two would not agree. But certainly there is a marked similarity in their conclusions, if not in their premises and logic, touching this whole subject. Both agree, (1) that the Scripture has but “*one sense* and that a simple one”; (2) so far as can be gathered, both agree that the Scripture “should be interpreted like any other book”; and that, *per se*, it should be no more difficult to get at the full and exact meaning of Scripture than of any reputable Greek or Latin author; (3) both agree, too, that the critic should free himself from all dogmatic restraints and give no heed to the ancient creeds of the Church, but should go at his work in a spirit of absolute independence and as feeling that nothing had ever been settled by competent authority—so settled as not to be re-opened and disputed by anybody’s private judgment; (4) both agree, moreover, that Biblical science was of no account in the earliest ages of the Church, and that, for the same reasons and in the same general manner as all the inductive sciences, it has been immensely advanced by the apparatus of modern inquiry. As to some of the results of this advance, I take it for granted that these two

writers would differ somewhat, probably very radically. For, as has been seen, in the judgment of very competent authority, Professor Jowett has excited grave suspicion that he no longer holds the distinctive doctrines of the faith as they are understood and received by the common-sense of Christendom; while it is certain that this writer would resent as entirely unwarrantable any imputation upon the soundness of his faith.

Per contra, let us inquire Whether the mystical method has not some ground in reason, in the nature of things—some respectable philosophy at its back, enough at any rate to prove that it is not altogether the childish folly of uncritical minds, or the crude offspring of misguided though devout imaginations, which it is the special office of our advanced science of biblical criticism to relegate to the limbo of exploded conceits.

Outward nature and Holy Scripture stand side by side as revelations of the eternal Godhead. How they differ it is not material just here to define. As expressions, though in different spheres and for different ends, of the Divine mind, they have, at least, a family likeness, a general analogy. What

the one says obscurely, the other says plainly. Where the one stops, the other may be said to begin. Man has a natural relation to the one, a supernatural to the other. From the one he learns the powers belonging chiefly to the life that now is ; from the other he learns " the powers of an endless life." But behind both is the same God, and through both, the same God speaks. The analogy extends further than we can trace it, and shades off in countless directions beyond the boundaries of human knowledge ; but enough of it is known to give a solid basis for reasonings which lawfully interpret much that is in Scripture by nature, and much that is in nature by Scripture.

Now, nature is one vast symbol of the God who made it, the work of the Workman, the creation of the Creator. It has a double language, because it has a double aspect. It speaks for itself as an effect, and for a power which is its cause. " The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."* Nature, then, on this ground, is more

* Romans 1 : 20.

than a “*one-sense, literal*” fact. It has its outward and its inward meanings, a voice of matter and a voice of spirit, the plain letter and the mystical life under the letter—the visible symbol and the inner power enshrined in the symbol.

But it is more than a “*one-sense*” existence on another ground and in another way. Dr. Mozley, in one of his University Sermons (vi.), has reasoned out and illustrated what I mean with so much power of logic and felicity of statement, that I gladly avail myself of his remarkable analysis and amplification of the thought.

“Nature has two great revelations—that of use and that of beauty. It would not be true, indeed, to say that use was universally accompanied by beauty ; still, upon that immense scale upon which nature is beautiful, she is beautiful by the self-same material and laws by which she is useful. The beauty of nature is not, as it were, a fortunate accident, which can be separated from her use. The beauty is just as much a part of nature as the use ; they are only different aspects of the self-same facts. But if they are united in their source, in themselves they are totally separate. The beauty is as imme-

ciate a derivation from the divine mind as the utility ; as much a vision of the divine raising as the solid structure is a machinery of the divine contrivance." It follows from this that the poet is, to say the least, as true and as necessary an interpreter of nature as the scientist. The only difference is that the one does his work by intuition, by feeling, by *mystical* communion with the sights, the pictures, the appearances of nature ; the other by search, by analysis, by induction, by generalization.

But again " when the materialist has exhausted himself in efforts to explain the utility in nature, it would appear to be the peculiar office of beauty to rise up suddenly as a confounding and baffling *extra*, which was not provided for in his scheme. Physical science goes back and back into nature, but it is the aspect and front of nature which gives the challenge ; and it is a challenge which no backward train of physical causes can meet. The physical causes are only all the separate items traced back step after step, which is no explanation of their adjustment and collocation so as to produce beauty. Thus, the more men retreat into the interior, the farther they fly from the true problem." Further, this writer

goes on to show that, while contrivance has a complete end and account of itself without any reference to the understanding of man, it being enough that it works and that we profit by its use whether the use be seen or no, it is essential to the very sense and meaning of beauty that it should be seen, and inasmuch as it is visible to reason alone, we have thus in the very structure of nature a recognition of reason, and a distinct address to reason; a thing wholly unaccountable unless there is a higher reason or mind to make it. For what but reason can address reason.

“Beauty stands upon the threshold of the *mystical* world. Mystical thought quickens worship, and the beauty of nature raises mystical thought. The mystical idea of the Deity is only, in fact, the moral idea of Him with curiosity superadded.” Again, “the manifestation of the Deity which takes place in the beauty of nature rests upon the ground and the principle of language. It is the revelation of the character of God in the only way a material type or similitude can be. But a type is a kind of distinct language—the language of oblique and indirect expression, as contrasted with direct. Imagine, then,

this language, this transparent veil of enigma or hint, carried into the exalted region of communication between the Supreme Being and the creature, and we have what is in fact the language of nature as a picture. If symbolism, indeed, has no natural basis, if the association of material images with moral is entirely arbitrary and artificial, then there is no language in nature ; but if, on the other hand, there is a consensus and uniformity in the interpretation of physical things, *i.e.*, the mode in which our feelings are affected by them ; if no people have ever existed to whom the sky has not suggested one set of ideas ; if God has always spoken with one voice—not literally in the thunder—but in the impress of awe and solemnity which He has attached to the thunder ; if love, joy, peace, hope have attached to the same features of nature everywhere ; if there is general agreement in these impresses, if they proceed inevitably from God's own work and the construction of our own minds, then there is language, and language in something more than a metaphorical sense, a true indication and communication according to the medium employed. The cipher is not unintelligible ; it lets out something.

The great Spirit, speaking by dumb representation to other spirits, intimates and signifies to them something about Himself. The Deity, over and above our inward conscience, wants His *external world* to tell us He is *moral*. He therefore creates in nature a universal language about Himself."

The writer guards against abuses of this language. "Certainly," says he, "no person has a right to fasten his own fancies upon the visible creation and say that its various features mean this and that, resemble this and that in the moral world ; but if the association is universal, if we cannot even describe nature without the help of moral terms—solemn, tender, awful, and the like—it is evidence of a natural and real similitude of physical things to moral."

Nature, then, has, at least, two faces, two voices, two meanings, two functions. She is literal fact, simple being, with certain properties, relations, and uses, and these are for science to investigate and classify. She is also a symbol, a picture, a thing of beauty, an oracle of moral feeling, witnessing to a Being who is the supreme object of that feeling, and these are for the poet and the prophet to interpret by a process which they cannot explain and by a faculty

half-hidden from themselves. Nature herself is *mystical* in her highest aspect, and must be *mystically* interpreted to the full extent that this aspect prevails.

But if this be true of the lower revelation of God, what right has any one to say that *a priori*, or *a posteriori*, there is no mystical element in the higher revelation? The lower speaks for the moral and spiritual, though vaguely and by dumb signs; the higher speaks for the same attributes by the arbitrary symbols of a written language; speaks positively and as definitely and completely as its imperfect medium of communication will permit. If nature's language is mute, clouded, uncertain, sometimes disguised, and misleading, written language is weighted with the same drawbacks, though in a far less degree. As a vehicle of divine thought, written language, while it is the best that can be had, is inevitably cumbered with imperfections. It may give us all of the thought and purpose of God that we require to know in this stage of being; but it can never give us the whole. It suggests more than it can express, points to depths and heights beyond its own reach, never tells the whole story of

Him who through it finds the needed contact with the creature, lifts the mind to a range of desire and contemplation which itself cannot ascend to, opens out into realms which itself cannot enter. The spirit is always mightier than the letter, accepts the restraints of syllables, words, sentences, and yet vastly transcends them, not only making room for, but necessitating mystical meanings and, by necessary consequence, mystical interpretations.

Written language, whatever its origin and laws of growth, is so largely the product of the human mind, that it must do what it undertakes, subject to the conditions and limitations of its human source. And yet the Infinite One employs it as the medium of communication with man. Language, as a power of expression, is affected by three relations: (1) by that which connects it with the phenomena which it is so largely occupied in naming—phenomena, first of the outer world and then of the inner world of thought and feeling; (2) by that which connects it with the mind, which is all the while at work under its own laws and requirements in subliming and refining physical, material designations into the abstract terms of things, and into

processes and powers included in the domain of the rational and moral and spiritual ; (3) by its relation to the Divine Intelligence who uses it to communicate with ourselves. Scripture language is affected by these relations to the full extent that it is the language of a revelation of the unseen, the eternal, and the infinite.

Again, not only is language itself largely composed of signs and symbols, but God in revealing Himself has seen fit greatly to enlarge its capacity for expression by using it to describe characters, scenes, pictures, events, aspects, and relations of human life selected by His inspired prophets, if not immediately by Himself, to shadow forth or openly exhibit the hidden things of His own spiritual kingdom. So He crowds into earlier dispensations, types, and parables, the reality and fulfilment of which wait for a later one. Shadows go before the substance, the prophetic pictures before the things pictured, Messianic adumbrations before the Messiah, the ritual of the Law before the ritual of the Gospel. On these grounds, grounds turning on the reason and fitness of things, it is impossible to exclude mystical renderings, and, contrary

to facts, to affirm, that Scripture has only *one sense*, and that the obvious one, precisely as though it were composed under the same limitations and for the same purpose as any work of a human author.

But from a view of the case suggested by our own reasonings, the force and relevancy of which may be disputed, I turn to the facts involved in the essential nature of the Scripture. Within certain limits it may be handled as any other book may be. It is a book while it is a revelation. It employs human language. That language has its syntax, etc. It stretches over on all sides into history, is colored by events, and manners, and institutions of contemporaneous empires and civilization, impinges on, nay draws into itself, many results and peculiarities of collateral literatures. In these and kindred ways it is like any great product of the human mind, and may be so treated. But, on the other hand, it has characteristics of its own which distinguish it above, and separate it from, all other books ; and because it has them, it cannot lawfully or properly be criticised, or interpreted by the same canons as any other book. It is enough for my purpose to name a very few out of many of these *sui generis* peculiarities.

(1) The Bible is the work of some forty different authors, all of whom claimed to speak, or at least an inspired apostle declares that they did speak, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They did so in such a sense as to justify the affirmation that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Their writings cover a stretch of fifteen centuries, and for fifteen centuries past, they have been collected into one volume, and have been regarded, during nearly all that time, as *the Book* by the Church Universal.

(2) It consists of two Testaments, the Old and the New. One dominating purpose pervades both. They are so bound together that it is impossible to separate them without leaving each an inexplicable enigma. The one is the necessary key to the other ; the meaning of both is the same ; foreshadowed in the Old, revealed in the New. "The Law is the Gospel foretold ; the Gospel is the Law fulfilled."

(3) Both Testaments profess to record the world's life from a heavenly standpoint. Both go upon the presumption that they knew what God did and proposed to do from the beginning, how He looks upon the characters, the transactions, the events of this earth, and how the unseen world is related to this

world. They treat this world as God's world, in a way which distinguishes them as *essentially* unlike all other books, "except such," as Bishop Butler remarks, "as are copied from them."

(4) Above all we have in the New Testament exhibited, as matter of fact, the Word made flesh, God incarnate.

(5) It is implied or expressed all through this Book that God, not man, is its author.

It is, then, radically unlike any other book, and, *a priori*, ought to be interpreted by canons of criticism that apply to itself alone. From its constitution, its purpose, its general character, it is, moreover, only reasonable to suppose that it contains a hidden or mystical, as well as a literal meaning. All the probabilities make strongly against "the one sense only" theory.

Such, I say, are the probabilities. But these probabilities are advanced to certainty—to a matter of fact—when we come to see how our Lord and His apostles interpreted Scripture. It is beyond all possible dispute that their method of handling the Old Testament was as far removed as well could be from *the literal, one-sense* notion. It is the

favorite saying of the *one-sense* school that “only out of the Scriptures can you interpret the Scriptures.” It is, therefore, of great moment to ascertain how the Scriptures interpreted themselves under the handling of Christ and His apostles. Now, if one thing be plainer than another in this handling, it is that they interpreted the Bible as no other book can be. They found meanings that were not simple and obvious to the ordinary reader. They confounded the Jews, time and again, by finding under the letter what the Jews had never dreamed of. The whole Messianic argument was an utter surprise to them. God’s purposes were brought out in absolutely new aspects. The law put on another front, prophecies familiar to the Jews as their alphabet were found to have depths of meaning—one lying upon another—into which their traditional surface study had never carried them. The signs and symbols, the characters and events of hundreds of years gone before were translated into the startling events of the hour. The veil of the old letter was rent asunder, and, for the first time, human eyes looked into the invisible and eternal world. The spiritual reality burst out

through the external wrappage of language like a long-pent-up flood. The *hidden* meaning displaced and overlaid the obvious, *one-sense* meaning, as the plant displaces and overlays the cerements of the dead germ out of which it sprang. Never was there such an exhibition of the mystical method of interpretation as when, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He [Christ] expounded to them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." How the apostles imitated His example, in this, it were needless to tell in detail. In fact, there is no more marked, constantly-recurring feature of the New Testament than the use of this method. To escape its consequences, to escape the thing itself, regarded in the light of an authority, such advocates of the *one-meaning* hypothesis as Professor Jowett have not hesitated to set it aside completely as a mere "*after-thought accommodation*" of the Old to the New. It was not, then, mystical interpretation at all, though coming from the lips of our Lord Himself, but "an accommodation (!) of the meaning of the Old Testament text to the thoughts of other times." And as if to leave no doubt as to the wide, radically destructive sweep of the *one-*

sense scheme and of this notion of "accommodation," this writer (and with regard to the Red Sea question, the Princeton reviewer agrees with him) says, "If we attribute to the details of the Mosaic ritual a reference to the New Testament, or suppose the passage of the Red Sea to be regarded not merely as a figure of baptism, but as a pre-ordained type, the principle is conceded." "A little more or a little less of the method does not make the difference."

But if the mystical method was, in fact, the method of our Lord and His apostles, what becomes of the statement of Professor Jowett, that "the mystical interpretation of Scripture *originated* in the Alexandrian age;" or that of the other writer referred to, that "the mystical principle was established when there was but little critical knowledge of history or language;" and that "we can never understand the early Fathers unless we read the works of Philo, the earlier master of symbolic wisdom." It is no doubt true that Philo had an influence, even a marked one, but the method came from another and greater Master.

Now all this may be regarded as prefatory to the

inquiry that is of so much moment to a right understanding of the subject, viz., how and what did the early Fathers learn from these inspired expounders of Holy Writ. They invented nothing essential to the method of interpretation which they followed. They walked in a path already marked out, and worked out results from premises already established. Their labors did not stand apart from what had gone before, but were cast in a mould that had been shaped by the highest possible authority. Mr. Burgon (now Dean of Chichester) has treated this point with great force and clearness, and I cannot do better than to quote his language :

“ There is a family resemblance in the method of all early expositions of Holy Scripture which vindicates for them, however remotely, a common origin, and which can be satisfactorily explained only by supposing that the remote type of all was the oral teaching of the Apostles themselves. In truth, is it credible that the early Christians would have been so forgetful of the discourse of the men who had seen the Lord, that no trace of it—no tradition of so much as the *manner* of it—should have lingered on for a hundred years after the death of

the last of the Apostles—down to the time when Origen, for example, was a young man? It cannot possibly be.

“ ‘The things which thou hast heard of among many witnesses,’ writes the great Apostle to his son Timothy, ‘the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.’ Provision is thus made by the aged saint, in the last of his epistles, for the transmission of his inspired teaching to a second and a third generation. Now, the words just quoted were written about the year 65, at which time Timothy was a young man. Unless we suppose that Almighty God curtailed the lives of the chief depositaries of His Word, Timothy will have lived on till A.D. 100; so that ‘faithful men,’ who died in the middle of the next century might have been trained and taught by him for many years. It follows that the faithful men last spoken of will have been ‘able to teach others also,’ whose writings (if they wrote at all) would range from A.D. 190 to A.D. 210. Now, just such a writer is Hippolytus—who is known to have been taught by that ‘faithful man,’ Irenæus, to whom, as it happens, the deposit was ‘committed’

by Polycarp, who stood to St. John in the self-same relation as Timothy to St. Paul.

“ Our Saviour is repeatedly declared to have interpreted the Old Testament to His disciples ; for instance, to the two going to Emmaus. Moreover, before He left the world, He solemnly promised His Apostles that the Holy Ghost, whom the Father should send in His name, ‘ should teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance all things which He had spoken to them.’ Shall we believe that the treasury of Divine Inspiration thus opened by Christ Himself was straightway closed up by its human guardians, and at once forgotten ? The great fact to be borne in mind (and it is the great fact which nothing can ever set aside or weaken) is, that for the first century at least of our era, there existed within the Christian Church *the gift of prophecy* ; that is of *Inspired Interpretation*. The minds of the Apostles Christ Himself ‘ *opened to understand the Scriptures.*’ Can it be any matter of surprise that men so enlightened, when they had been miraculously endowed with the gift of tongues, and scattered over the face of the ancient civilized world, should have disseminated *the same princi-*

ples of Catholic interpretation, as well as the same elements of saving truth? When this miraculous *gift* ceased, its results did not also come to an end. By what possible logic can the teaching of the early Church be severed from its source? It cannot be supposed for a moment that such a severance ever took place. The teaching of the Apostolic age was the immediate parent of the teaching of the earliest of the Fathers—in whose schools it is a matter of history that those Patristic writers with whom we are most familiar, studied and became famous. Accordingly, we discover a method of interpreting Holy Scripture strictly resembling *that employed by our Saviour and His apostles, in all the earliest Patristic writings*. As documents increase the evidence is multiplied, and at the end of two or three centuries after the death of St. John the Evangelist, voices are heard from Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine; from Antioch and from other parts of Syria; from the eastern and western extremities of North Africa; from many regions of Asia Minor; from Constantinople, and from Greece; from Rome, from Milan, and from other parts of Italy; from Cyprus and from Gaul—all singing in

unison, all singing the same heavenly song ! In what way but one is so extraordinary a phenomenon to be accounted for ? Are we to believe that there was a general conspiracy of the East and the West, the North and the South, to interpret Holy Scripture in a certain way ; and that way the wrong way ?”*

The mystical canon of interpretation has been disparaged and held up to ridicule, because of the extremes to which it has been pushed and of the abuses to which it is liable. Without denying these extremes and abuses, nay, rather admitting all that can be said about them, it must be remembered that if the mystical canon is to be set aside on this ground, the literal, “one-sense” canon must share the same fate and on the same ground. For not much learning or research is needed to put in array the barren and shallow renderings of the sacred text by the latter. The masters of the Patristic method may have crowded too many meanings in this and that passage of God’s Word—may have run out into many indefensible fancies of allegory and parallelism ; but the masters of the new

* Burgon on Inspiration.

method have sinned quite as grievously, only in the opposite direction. For example, it has always been thought that our Lord's words to Nicodemus about the new birth had a good deal to do with a very deep view of regeneration by baptism and involved a direct reference to that unspeakable mystery of the Holy Spirit. But it seems, under the new light thrown upon those words, that this was all a mistake and that our Lord meant when He used them to do no more than declare the incoming of a kingdom of more spiritual gifts than John taught in baptism by water.

Again, it has generally been believed by the best scholars of the old sort that the Epistle to the Romans (8 : 28-30) does refer to certain Divine decrees or predetermined plans of God respecting the calling and saving of mankind, however they may be interpreted, whether by Calvin, or Arminius, or by anybody else.* But it now appears, according to

* There has never been any question but that the Scriptures—eminently this passage in the Epistle to the Romans—teach us concerning the election and predestination of God. All Christians accept the doctrine of election, and the only contention has been as to the meaning of the doctrine.

Calvin gave it one meaning, Arminius another, Locke

the new canon of criticism, that this, too, was all a mistake, and all the grave, profound thinking on this passage from Augustine down is to be consigned, as simply "our metaphysics," to the common warehouse of defunct and useless speculation.

Again, considerable importance has always been attached to our Lord's words to Peter about "the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." But it now appears that Dean Stanley, an enterprising student

another, Faber another, Richard Baxter still another. But the fact that God does elect and predestinate none have doubted. It matters not how these theories have successively collided with or, for the time being, displaced each other; no recent criticism of the sacred text has discovered anything that prevents, or renders improbable, the revival of any one of these views of election, at any time. There are even now some symptoms of a return to the Calvinistic idea—a return likely to be more or less stimulated by the extravagant assertion of the doctrine of individualism now so prevalent—a doctrine which threatens to build all modern life on the hypothesis that man is self-evolving, self-governing, self-sufficient—that there is no rightful challenge to his liberty so long as the exercise of it does not infringe upon the peace and order of society; and this, for the reason (given by at least one popular school of philosophy), that, if there be a God, his freedom expresses and completes itself (in the only form that we can know it), in and through the free will of humanity. **The pendulum is sure to swing back sooner or later.**

of the new school, has lately discovered that "this classic text for absolution" is no more than the mistaken phrase of the Rabbis, who meant by "binding and loosing" the action of their courts of law. A vast deal more of the same sort of eviscerating criticism might easily be cited; but *ex uno disce omnia*.

But granting, what is a fact, that both the methods are open to abuse, it is of moment to inquire what safeguards and checks (if any) against perversions and extremes each provides. The new method felicitates itself on its complete emancipation from what it calls "the after-thoughts of theology," *i.e.*, the restraints of Christian dogma, wherever found and however formulated. "The simplest laws of knowledge are always the latest." A decent respect must be paid to what has, in thoughtful ages, passed for learning; but this must not be allowed to dictate conclusions to the riper learning of today, whose good fortune it is to have eliminated by a progressive evolution the crudities of bygone schools. Scripture is safely and truly interpreted only when it interprets itself, the only outside factor required being the private judgment of the

critic, aided by the best implements of interpretation which the latest learning can supply. Little account is made of the fact that no student, no critic, or interpreter can resolve himself into a colorless medium, or divest himself of a bias one way or the other. No scholar or thinker stands apart from the intellectual or religious life circling around him. Some theory of truth, some scheme of speculation, some sort of philosophy, some phase of religion is always behind him, looking through his eyes, breathing through his breath, speaking through his voice. And so it not seldom happens that the most self-centred critic in profession is the least so in reality. So true is this, that it is only necessary that a historical critic put in a special claim to independence, to create suspicion of his candor. The checks and safeguards, then, provided for itself by the new method are practically nothing more than individual knowledge permeated and swayed by this or that set of tendencies, or phases of the age. But what, on the other hand, are those of the old method—call it the traditional, the patristic, the mystical, or what not, as you please? It may not be so well up in exact learn-

ing, or in recent discoveries in philology, ethnology, archæology, etc., it may not have the highest measure of common-sense, it may have no special genius for taking sentences apart and putting them together again, like a Chinese puzzle, or for puncturing as with a needle the nerve tissues of individual words ; it may be lacking in many desirable helps and chargeable with many damaging deficiencies. But it does one thing, erects one safeguard, imposes one restraint worth more than all others. There is one law, one authority that it obeys, as a fundamental duty, and that is the law, the authority, of the *Analogia Fidei*. And what is this ? Let me trace, in as few words as possible, its ground, its origin, how it took shape, how it expresses itself, and the scope of its operation, in the sphere of Biblical interpretation. It is more than a vaguely conceived, unshapen basis of doctrine laid in the deep foundations of Scripture—a basis that with spongy flexibility offers itself as a convenient corner stone on which any and all religious thinkers may build. The successive schools of controversial divinity, during the last fourteen hundred years, have aimed to establish this Analogy of the Faith, or to correct

violations of it, or to reconcile with it their respective peculiarities. It has always been understood to forbid the interpretation of Scripture according to men's private notions, also the deduction of doctrine from one or two texts or chapters taken singly and by themselves ; and to imply the general symmetry and harmony of the whole body of Christian doctrine, and the relation or proportion of each special doctrine preached, or text expounded, to that entire body of doctrine. It started with a body of truth possessed of the attributes of unity, universality, and perpetuity, and rests upon the fact that the Church has never been without such a body of truth whose parts were duly proportioned to each other and to the whole. *

Historically, it is not difficult to trace and account for the *Analogia Fidei*. "The origin and first establishment of Christianity were by the preaching of living men, who said they were commissioned to proclaim it. There is a vague and unreasoning notion that Christianity was taken from the New Testament. The notion is historically untrue. Christianity was widely extended through

* Romans 12 : 6 ; 2 Timothy 1 : 13 ; 2 Timothy 2 : 2.

the civilized world before the New Testament was written ; and its several books were successively addressed to various bodies of Christian believers ; to bodies, that is, who already possessed the faith of Christ in its integrity. When, indeed, God ceased to inspire persons to write these books, and when they were all collected together into what we call the New Testament, the existing faith of the Church, derived from oral teaching, was tested by comparison with this inspired record. And it henceforth became the standing law of the Church that nothing should be received as necessary to salvation which could not stand that test. But still, though thus tested (every article being proved by the New Testament), Christianity is not taken from it, *for it existed before it.*

“ What then was the Christianity which was thus established ? Have we any record of it as it existed before the New Testament became the sole authoritative standard ? I answer, We have. The creeds of the Christian Church are the record of it. That is precisely what they purport to be ; not documents taken from the New Testament, but documents transmitting to us the faith as it was

held from the beginning; the faith as it was preached by inspired men, before the inspired men put forth any writings; the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Accordingly you will find that our Church, in her Eighth Article, does not ground her affirmation that the creeds ought to be 'thoroughly received and believed' on the fact that they were *taken out* of the New Testament (which they were not), but on the fact that *they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.* The fall of man, original sin, the atonement, the Divinity of Christ, the Trinity, all have their place in the faith held from the beginning. They are imbedded in the creeds, and in that general scheme of doctrine which circles round the creeds and is involved in them."*

All essential truths, then, were, as matter of history, gathered up into "a form of sound words," and were "the things that [as St. Paul wrote to Timothy] thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." If

* From a sermon by the Rev. F. B. Woodward. 1861 (Rivingtons.)

they were thus gathered and arranged by inspired wisdom, there can be no doubt that they were adjusted to each other in their true proportion and with a view to the unity and harmony of all the parts of the body of sound doctrine. Nothing was in excess, nothing in defect, nothing essential to salvation left out, nothing needful to express the mind of Scripture, when Scripture should appear in its completed form, omitted. Now it is only reasonable to suppose that a body of truth thus framed to exhibit the analogy or proportion of the faith would be of the greatest service, in all ages, in the interpretation of God's written Word. It was actually so regarded and used by all branches of the Patristic school, and all of this school who applied it with requisite skill and discretion found in it not only very valuable and real aid, but also a restraint and safeguard which, if they did not prevent their running into some fanciful renderings of the Scripture, did prevent their lapse into teachings that contradicted the fundamentals of the faith. The method of this school was from the start *deductive, not inductive*. It received all the principles of saving truth as already established, and made

it its chief business to run them out into particulars, to trace them through the Scripture, and to prove them thereby. In contrast with this, the modern method accounts it its chief distinction to proceed *inductively*, *i.e.*, to inquire into and marshal the particulars of God's Word first, then to generalize them, and then to formulate them into principles; each inquirer or critic doing the work independently, and according to tests and standards approved by his own individual judgment.

Though the fact may not weigh much with some, it should be understood that this method is opposed to the rule adopted at the time of the Reformation, which appealed to the Scriptures as interpreted by the Fathers of the first four centuries—a rule which has determined ever since not only the tone and spirit, but the formal teaching of the most learned and best accredited commentators in the Church of England. And to go still further back, it is opposed to the uniform consensus of the Church Universal, to the practice of Patristic antiquity, to the witness and decision of the early councils—*i.e.*, the primitive creeds—to the constant use of the Apostles, and finally, to the method of our Lord

Himself. Very solid, indeed must be the grounds, very urgent the needs, which would justify us in turning our backs upon such an array of adverse authorities, in order to embrace the doubtful advantages of this literal, "one-sense," inductive, private-judgment method of Biblical interpretation. The analogy of faith and the method based upon and regulated by it cannot be lightly put aside by the new learning. No possible increase of knowledge, however drawn from the various fields of investigation, can displace a principle which, from the beginning, has been immovably rooted in the mind and practice of the Church of God.

The new school seems to take it for granted that the old one has been lacking in careful and accurate learning, as also in enterprising inquiry and minute, painstaking, verbal criticism. It announces itself, with an assured confidence, as having already done much to supply this deficiency, and as promising to do a vast deal more in this direction. If one credited the half that is claimed in this way, he would be forced to admit that Hermeneutical studies had been greatly neglected in the most scholarly and thoughtful ages of the Church, and that somehow

the best Christian learning had spent itself in a sort of treadmill life, showing constant motion, but no advance. Now, in themselves considered, there is no reason why the new method should be more learned, minute, accurate, and exhaustive in its scholarship, or in its actual handling of the sacred text, than the old. The process of generalizing from particulars or of inductive inquiry involves no more care, supplies no sharper incentives to elaborate and accurate learning, than the opposite process of tracing out into, and verifying by particulars, certain fundamental truths accepted, at the very start, on competent authority.

What we might expect, *à priori*, is true in fact. The science of Biblical interpretation is not the creature of this or of the last century, or of both. It has been professed, cultivated, and practised in every country of Christendom and in every age of the Church, and has always been esteemed one of the noblest and best understood. It has had a long line of illustrious masters, who in power of intellect and vastness of attainment, as well as in piety and devotion, compare, to say the least, very favorably with those of to-day, of whatever school. If there

are giants now in this field, their stature certainly is not magnified when put alongside such men as Hilary of Poitiers, Basil, and the two Gregories, Theodoret, Epiphanius, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Athanasius, and Cyril of Alexandria, and so on down (not to name other strong links in the mighty chain) to the time of Andrewes, and Bull, and Pearson, and Mill. And, to-day, what superiority, in any of the requirements for scholarly and exhaustive sacred criticism, have Jowett and Alford over Wordsworth and Pusey?

I am not unaware either of the claims, or the achievements of the various schools of interpretation which it is part of the pride and glory of Germany to have produced in the century past. I would speak of both only in terms of profound respect and even of grateful homage. Their patience and thoroughness, and often the novelty of their inventions and the genius exhibited in vindicating their plausibility, if not their truth, have justly excited the admiration of Christian scholars of every land. And yet now that the time has come for sifting the chaff from the wheat, the actual harvest to be stored away in the grana-

ries of the Church for the future feeding of the people of God does not seem to be as promising as many once believed it would be. The scaffolding is being taken down little by little ; the noise of the new tools employed is dying away on the ear ; and, as the building comes out more and more upon the eye, we begin to see that it is neither so solid in its masonry nor so spacious in its dimensions, as was anticipated. In fact, a careful scrutiny of results shows that nothing has been added to our saving knowledge, that no essential of the faith has been displaced or seriously modified, that the great Christian Tradition of God's truth leaves the century substantially as it entered it, that the constituent elements and average conditions of personal religion are undisturbed, and the original Institutions and Offices of the Church still abide in their integrity and do the work as of old, whereunto they were appointed. What the Christian world will remember longest, next to the prodigious learning expended, will be certain formidable attacks upon the inspiration, the authenticity, and genuineness of many books of the Canonical Scriptures ; and certain self-devouring, or mu-

tually annihilating theories touching the Divine Person and miraculous attestations of the Church's eternal Head ; it being the memorable characteristic of most of these attacks and theories that they have been already, in one way or another, partially or wholly abandoned by the great learning, the marvellously-equipped science under whose auspices they were originally inaugurated.

It is said that " the exposition of the New Testament has within these forty years had a wonderful progress." No doubt of it ; but so far as this progress has been real and healthy, as well as " wonderful," it has by its efforts to freshen and enlarge our knowledge of Scripture details, served to bring out only in a stronger light the primitive verities of the ancient Catholic tradition. So far as it has affected the general body of doctrine current in our day, its influence has been shown in helping to break through and sweep aside the dogmatic systems of modern sectarian growth which, like so many incrustations, had fastened on the old Nicene faith.

Again, it is said that " the masters of modern exegesis are working together toward a biblical

theology which will hold up to dogmatics and ethics the real, and in many regards more complete, model, wherein they have their standard." It is, then, the grand aim of modern exegesis to work out a theology which shall in some sense, not hitherto exemplified, be essentially biblical. Now, it is not apparent exactly what is meant by such a theology; for all Christian theologies, however metaphysical or speculative in their reasonings, have professed to claim no authority or value save as they were grounded upon the Word of God. The only respect in which this is likely to differ from the rest must consist in the rigid exclusion of all such reasonings. It enters into the very conception of this coming theology that it shall be the result not only of a more exhaustive study of Holy Scripture, but of the thorough use of the inductive method, *i.e.*, first a critical examination of all the individual items of revelation, and then a systematic classification of these items, and then a deduction from them of the verities which form the subject-matter of theology.

Now, so far as this process will lead us back to the fresh, vitalizing views of the person and work

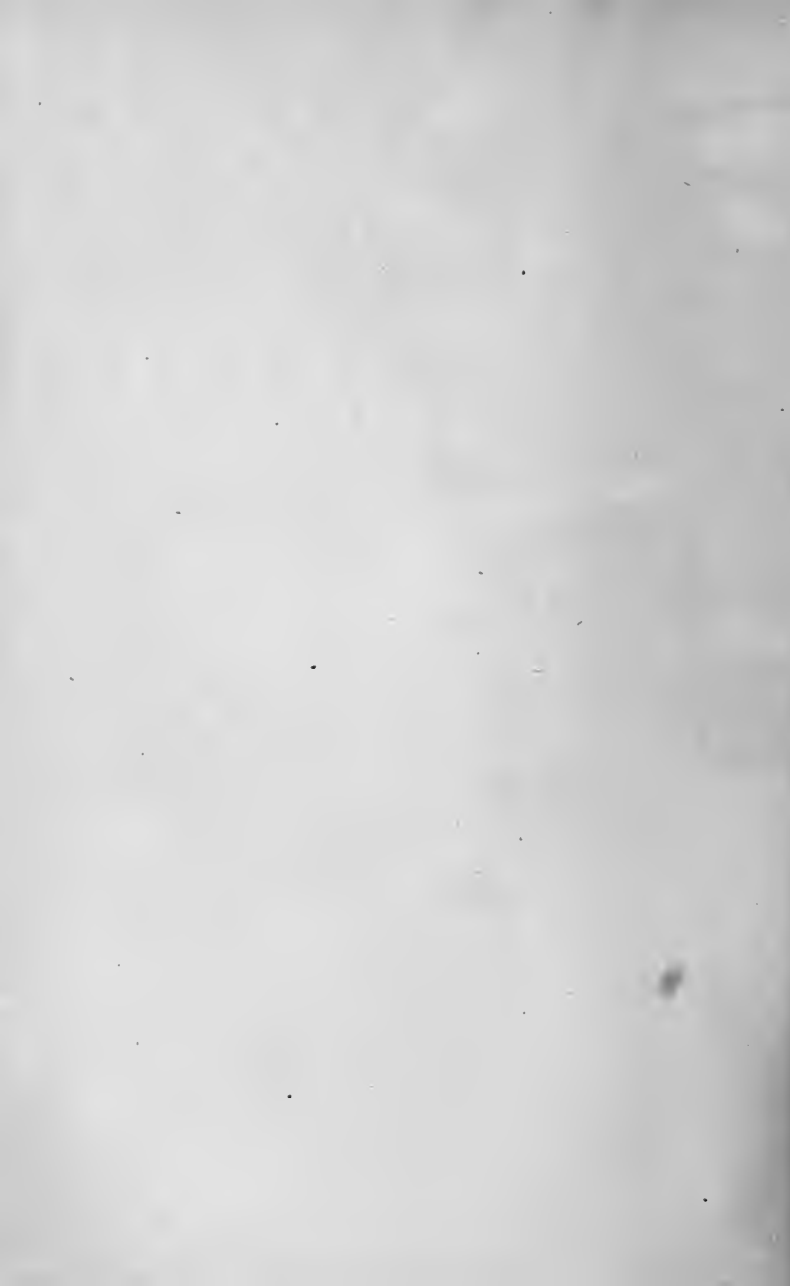
of Christ—his character, teaching, and offices; also of what inspired Apostles said and did; also of what they said and did who sat at the feet of the Apostles—so far as it shall do this, it will render a most valuable service to “dogmatics and ethics.” But to the full extent that it does so, it must inevitably simply reproduce the mind of Scripture as they originally interpreted it; and so reproduce in modern dress the ante-Nicene theology—thus returning to the fountain-head for all its governing principles, *i.e.*, to the Primitive and Catholic *Analogia Fidei*. The only other rule which it can adopt, as its *norma normans*, is the items of the Scripture wrought up into systematic shape by individual critics, each acting independently on his own judgment, and of course more or less biased by the general temper and genius of the present age.

But the result of this process will be as many biblical theologies, as there are theological builders, and therefore an aggravation of the present confusions and contradictions. But, what is more likely to happen, these individual critics and builders will divide up into schools according to some law of in-

telleetual or religious affinity ; and so we shall be brought back to substantially the same state of things from which this theology of the future, resting on an improved exegesis, proposes to extricate us. The fact is, it matters not how much the modern exegesis promises to accomplish toward the elimination from all existing theologies of their strictly human or positively alien elements, the real value of its work will depend on the extent to which it accepts, as its guiding principle, the very *Analogia Fidei* which its chosen advocates and admitted masters profess to have partially or wholly rejected.









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