



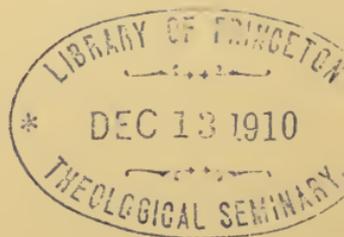
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The pastor and his parish
Section

THE PASTOR AND HIS PARISH

THE PASTOR AND
HIS PARISH



BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
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THE PASTOR IN HIS PREACHING

I

THE PASTOR IN HIS PREACHING

IN considering the topics to which, in the discharge of my duty as chief pastor of this diocese, it appears to be my duty to direct your attention, the thought inevitably rises to my mind that in all human probability this may be the last opportunity which I shall have of addressing you at my Episcopal Visitation. And it occurs to me that perhaps the most useful course which I can adopt will be to offer you some of the results which I have gathered and conclusions that I have come to, from my experience of half a century in the sacred priesthood as curate, missionary, incumbent, and bishop.

As a preliminary, it will be necessary for

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us in the very first place to realise definitely what is the object of the sacred priesthood, which in a word is this—to promote the glory of God in the salvation of immortal souls. This, and nothing less than this, must be the object, the paramount object, to which if necessary everything else must give way, of God's ordained minister.

“Follow Me,” said our Incarnate Lord to those who are the representatives of the evangelic priesthood, “and I will make you fishers of men.” As it is the object of the fisherman, that to which he bends all his thoughts and efforts, to catch his prey, so it is the great object in life of God's minister to catch immortal souls, not for himself, but for God's glory and their own everlasting happiness.

This was the object, pursued through his Christian life, of the great Apostle, so to live and speak and act that he might “save souls.” And as a faithful bishop he advises his son Timothy whom he ordained, how he might both “save himself and them that

heard him." Let us, my dear brethren, get fast hold of this principle. You and I as priests of the Church exist for this object, to "save souls." This is the means by which we can fulfil the will of God and promote His glory.

Yet I much fear that this principle is not in actuality made paramount by all of our brethren. It would be well if it were so. For instance, not a few of the troubles which afflict and hinder the Church with regard to matters ceremonial would in that case disappear.

There is, in reality, I fear, much of self-pleasing in this matter. A clergyman thinks a certain act of ceremonial, or some ornament of the sanctuary, nice. Possibly in the past he thinks it has been useful to himself, and so, though it is obviously non-essential, he introduces it for the first time into the church to which he has been appointed, not considering the way in which it may be regarded by his parishioners, to whom it is an entire novelty. He is

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annoyed and indignant because some of them are perplexed and some angry. They ought to receive it, he thinks, on his authority.

But really, why should they? They have had previously other rectors, and none of them ever used this ceremony. Quite likely there was one clergyman at least whom they specially loved and honoured. He would, they know, have introduced it if it had been right, and for their good. But he did not.

Now comes this new clergyman, who at once introduces practices never heard of in that parish before. And their natural conservative instincts suggest that he is an innovator, rash, and tainted with novel and unwarranted notions.

In this way suspicion is engendered, and dissatisfaction, with the result that the clergyman finds to his chagrin that his congregation becomes smaller, some falling away to the Dissenters, and some, far worse! to indifferentism. If he is truly a

good man, he is grieved; if self-willed, he lays the blame on the ignorance of the people. Thus the Church loses adherents and precious souls suffer.

I do not say that this thoughtless and culpable alienation of God's people is common in our diocese, but it is far too prevalent throughout England, and more frequent than is desirable among ourselves. The pity is, this sad weakening of the Church, which is, alas! going on in many parishes, would be in great degree prevented if clergymen would exercise a little wholesome self-abnegation with regard to their own tastes and likings, and solemnly ask themselves such questions as these: "Will this ceremony, or this ornament, really promote the salvation of these precious souls entrusted to me by the Church?"

"Is it likely, looking to their past history and their prejudices, that my parishioners will be offended?"

"Should I be justified for the sake of this usage, which I like, in driving away one

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communicant from that holy sacrament which the Church tells me is generally necessary for salvation?

“What are the principles laid down by the holy Apostle with regard to the ‘adiaphora,’ things indifferent? If I alienate precious souls from the saving ordinances of the Church by my action in this matter, shall I be able to justify my conduct at the last great day?”

There can be no serious doubt amongst calmly-judging minds that some of the ceremonies of late introduced by a small minority of the clergy are novel in the Church of England since the Reformation. Some are inconsistent with, and some distinctly prohibited by, the Articles and Rubrics of the Church.

With regard to such as these a new argument has recently been brought forward and strenuously professed by one extreme party in the Church. It is said with much confidence, “The Church of England claims to be Catholic. If she is not a true part of

the Catholic Church, she is nothing. These ceremonies and usages are Catholic. Therefore if they have been prohibited, those prohibitions are null and void. These ceremonies are a part of our heritage, and they must be practised."

This argument will, to some minds, appear valid, but indeed it is fallacious and could lead to nothing but confusion. For what is a "Catholic" custom? Is it a custom, or ceremony, which obtains in the Western Church, but not in the great Orthodox Church of the East? Is it a ceremony now held by East and West, but perhaps not held—nay, possibly reprobated (like incense) by the primitive Fathers of the Church? Or is it a ceremony—like some connected with Confirmation—varying at different times, and in different parts of the Church?

Those who employ this argument have no authority which is competent to decide what is Catholic and what is not. It practically becomes a matter of private opinion. Men

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of different "schools of thought" in the Church decide differently upon the question. Thus under this individualistic plan of "Catholic custom" the regulations of the Church would be set aside, a great variety of usages, wholly unauthorised, would be introduced; and the result would be chaos.

No! The proper authority to decide for you and me what is Catholic is the Church herself, of which you and I are baptized members and ordained priests. This the Church claims, and in actual fact this has the Church done. In our 34th Article the Church lays it down that "every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority."

This, in point of fact, our Church has done. Upon her own authority, she has framed her Prayer-book and her Articles, rejecting doctrines some as novel and others as superstitious, and has with deliberate intention dropped ceremonies, as being

harmful, or absurd, or dangerous, which had previously been in use. So that the individualistic theory, upon which I am commenting, is in fact inconsistent with the principles upon which the Church of England has deliberately acted, inconsistent therefore with thorough loyalty to the Church.

We may, moreover, well ask those who, because of their private opinions and likings, would use practices either prohibited or intentionally dropped by the Church, whether they regard them as essential or non-essential. If the latter, is it consistent with loyalty, charity, and desire for the peace and harmony of the Church, to disobey her directions and cause disturbance and alienations and consequent weakness and all for matters non-essential? But if the former, if they believe that the Church of England is wrong, and has given wrong directions on matters which are essential, does not this show that while holding this conviction they yet remain

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within her fold, they are, in fact, in a false position ?

Another equally important point with regard to our paramount duty to the souls of the people entrusted to us, is to be found in the neglect, under various specious pleas, of affording them the proper, legal, and accustomed means of grace.

There are some of our brethren, happily only a few, who desire for their own convenience from time to time, to "drop" some of the proper legal Sunday services. A clergyman, *e.g.*, who holds two parishes, desires to drop some of the offices of the day, probably a morning service, on the ground that he needs a holiday. But it should be borne in mind that the benefice has been endowed, not for the sake of the parish priest, but in order that the people of the parish—God's people—may week by week, and day by day, have the full benefit of the means of grace.

What will happen if a parish, having enjoyed two full services each Sunday, with

perhaps an early celebration of Holy Communion once in the month, is left for some weeks with only one alternate morning or afternoon service? Will the parishioners be content with such a meagre supply of spiritual food?

A truly zealous pastor would regard it as a deeply disappointing result of his ministry if they were so satisfied. This would show that the people had not learned to value the means of grace. If the people are really loving and zealous members of the Church, they ought not to be satisfied with such inadequate means of instruction and grace.

What, then, will they do? If they earnestly desire spiritual food, they will naturally attend the Nonconformist chapel, which will not be shut up; and the pastor, on his return, will find some of his flock adhering—and no wonder—to the Dissenting community. Will this grieve him? Or, if not that, they will do far worse, and get slack in their attendance at church, perhaps

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ceasing their attendance at the morning service altogether.

And who will be responsible for this? When divine services are dropped for the convenience of the clergyman, the people naturally, inevitably, draw the conclusion in their own mind that this minister does not really love their souls. What influence, then, will he have over them? Will he be likely to lead them to God in the way of holiness? For these obvious reasons I have felt it my duty, in order that the sheep may be properly fed, to prohibit the "dropping" of the divine services during the absence on holiday of the parish priest.

There should be, indeed, very little difficulty in making arrangements for the due shepherding of the sheep; for in the remarkably salubrious air of East Anglia, and with the usually comfortable parsonages and light clerical work of the rural parishes, there is no difficulty in obtaining the services of a resident brother clergyman for a few weeks in the summer. Indeed, an

exchange may often be made, and not infrequently is made, between two clergymen, both beneficed priests of this diocese. I may add that in all cases where a *locum tenens* is to be introduced into a parish I wish to be consulted before the agreement is definitely made.

I am occasionally asked to sanction the giving up of services under other conditions. A clergyman urges that so few persons attend the Sunday morning service that it might well be omitted, and so he would be free to help a neighbouring clergyman. Or, a clergyman desires to take a vacant neighbouring parish in addition to his own, and suggests that an alternate morning service would be sufficient, as so very few, perhaps only seven or eight adults, in addition to the children, attend the morning service.

These suggestions, which, I am thankful to say, are not frequent, do indeed show a low standard of ministerial work.

We must not dream of dropping a service

because it is only slenderly attended. That, possibly, may be the result of past ministerial neglect. To abandon services because they appear not to be a success is the policy of faithlessness and indolence. We must continue our services, and, by the help of God, make them a success. And if they do not become what would be commonly considered a success, we must remember that effort belongs to us. Woe unto us if we do not put forth our best efforts! But success rests with God.

Besides, if we really do our poor best in faith and prayer, whatever man may think, God will reckon the result as a success. Why, "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together," the Son of God is there, the worship of the Church is offered, God is glorified.

We must not think too much of the "attendance." The sacrifice of praise and prayer is offered. Our part, my dear brethren, is to labour on in faith and prayer.

Nor must we lay exclusive stress upon

the number of people present at our services. We should be thankful whether many people are present or not—it is ours, of course, to bring them to church if we can—if we ourselves have the privilege of offering our prayers and praises and thanksgivings, and of making our intercessions for those who are absent.

I know well, from my experiences in colonial and missionary work, the disappointment of finding but a handful of people present for the worship of God. After climbing up and down ravines, and forcing one's way through the forest, I have found three persons present for the divine service on Easter morning. The experience was novel to one accustomed to the glorious services of Leeds Parish Church. But the lesson went home. If the blessed Son of God, impelled by the burning love of souls, preached two of His heavenly discourses to a single soul, to Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, can I complain, or hesitate to do my duty thankfully and joy-

fully, because only a few precious souls are here to worship with me!

We may hope for results, and pray that, if it be the Divine will, we may see some results; but whether there are apparent results or not, we must labour on. "If there be a willing mind, a man is accepted according to that which he hath, and not according to that which he hath not." Ah! that "willing mind." It is that which we must cultivate and pray for. If we do our poor best without making the prospect of success a *sine qua non*—not waiting, for instance, to begin a Bible-class until we have reason to believe that it will be eagerly taken advantage of, if we but institute means of grace and do our utmost to make them useful to the souls of the people—God will give us success as seems best unto Him. Even if He give no apparent success at present, we shall have pleased Him by our faithful effort.

This is the secret of all true work in the ministry, the humble, fervent desire to be

used of God for the salvation of the immortal souls whom He loves. And with regard to the estimation of your fellow-men, the one sufficient motto is this : "So demean yourself in your life and work that you convince your people that you are not actuated by self-interest, but that you really love their souls." If they believe this you will win their respect and affection, and will exercise an elevating, sanctifying influence over them.

But let us now apply the foregoing principles to the employment of our ministerial functions. "I will make you fishers of men." Let us consider the cast-net of preaching. "Preach the Word; be instant, *ἐπίστυθη*, 'be on the alert for an opportunity of preaching' (oh! how different from the estimate of preaching held by some amongst us!), reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

St. Timothy, the ordained clergyman, is to do the work of an evangelist, to show himself approved unto God, a workman

that needeth not to be ashamed laying out straight and true, ὀρθοτομουνητα, the word of life. Preaching is regarded in the Scriptures as a work of much weight, responsibility, and honour. Therefore those presbyters who labour in the word and doctrine are to be accounted worthy of a double remuneration. As for the Apostle himself, he feels that a necessity is laid upon him; yea, it would be woe unto him if he did not preach the gospel.

Here, then, we observe (1) that the preaching of God's Word, the declaring of His message to the souls of men, is to be regarded as a very weighty and solemn and responsible office.

Is it commonly so regarded? I much fear that by many of our brethren it is not. Pains are taken to have "a good service," bright and attractive, where not uncommonly no trouble has been taken about the sermon, which possibly may be shallow, jejune, aimless. This is one of the reasons why our public worship is to so large an

extent deserted by men, especially in the towns.

On the other hand, I think I have observed that in the churches where there is a better proportion of men among the congregation, the clergy are men who give thought and careful preparation to their sermons. There is no comment more frequently upon the lips of the layman as he walks away from the church than this: "Now, what was there in that sermon to give a man food for thought?"

And he is quite right in his comment. The emotions are not the only part of man's nature which should be employed in the service of God. The intellect has its sphere. And in our public assemblies food should be offered for the workings and devout meditations of the intellect.

The sermon should be the result of thought—thought and meditation upon the Word of God, the message of salvation, thought also upon the needs of the soul and the requirements of human nature. Some of

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our preachers appear to preach as if they thought or assumed that all their hearers are in a state of grace and salvation, and so they speak upon the subsidiary points of our holy religion, or almost entirely upon the ordinances and means of grace, especially the Eucharist.

Yet we know that that holy sacrament is only for those who are in a state of grace; whereas a certain portion of the hearers have never in heartfelt penitence taken their sins to their Saviour for pardon, have never given their hearts to Him, nor offered themselves in body, soul, and spirit to Him and His service. No one who has a knowledge of religion and experience of souls can doubt that what is commonly known as conversion, the heart-penitent abandonment of sin, the surrender of the heart and the dedication of the life to the blessed Saviour, is sometimes, not infrequently, brought about by the agency of the Holy Spirit acting through the instrumentality of preaching.

But, humanly speaking, what likelihood is

there of such spiritual effects being wrought through the instrumentality of such preaching as I have alluded to!

Yet it is to be remembered that while it must be a primary object to the preacher to bring, by the grace of God, those who are Christians in name only into a state of grace and salvation, yet we must avoid the error, into which a few of our dear brethren fall, of preaching nothing but conversion. This, being wearisome, sometimes fails in its very object, and leaves the earnest soul uninstructed.

St. Paul speaks of himself and the other preachers of the Gospel as "warning every man and teaching every man (*νοθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον και διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον*) in all wisdom that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Believing Christians who are in a state of grace require to be built up (edified) in the faith, nourished and instructed in the faith. All this we see in the inspired Epistles of the holy Apostles.

In this point of view I may ask is there in

our preaching enough of this definite teaching of which St. Paul speaks, enough of the exposition of Holy Scripture, enough of that "going on unto perfection" of which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaks (vi. 1)? I remember Mr. Gladstone once expressing to me his surprise that the clergy do not more frequently preach expository sermons, at the same time stating his own opinion of their great helpfulness. Surely we should remember that a large number of our congregations get, or ought to get, the chief part of their knowledge of Holy Scripture and the doctrines of the Church from our sermons. You will have observed how constantly St. Paul, in his letters to St. Timothy, dwells upon the importance of teaching sound doctrine to the converts. Will our sermons bear that test?

I am not composing a treatise on sermons ; but wishing only to give you, my younger brethren especially, some of the conclusions of my own thoughts and experience in this very important matter—especially regarding

preaching as a means, a cast-net, in the hands of spiritual fishermen.

From this point of view it is all important that the sermon should be the result of intense conviction. The lack of this is fatal. It is a fact of our human nature that, on any subject of human knowledge or opinion, we are impressed with the sincerity and deep earnestness of the speaker. Especially is this true of religion. Is it likely that men will be much influenced by the utterances of a man who apparently has made no careful preparation of his subject and gives no sign of being really interested in what he is saying? If men, shall I say young men, convey the idea that they only regard the sermon as being an accustomed exercise which they do not value, but cannot escape, how is it possible for their perfunctory effort, speaking humanly, to be anything but fruitless?

Whereas, on the other hand, there can hardly be a more favourable comment upon a sermon than this: "Well, anyway

that man believes with all his heart in the truth and importance of what he says." There must be a sense of reality about a sermon. And the great and momentous truths of the gospel, when preached with reality, earnestness, and fervour, have an effect upon the hearers greater or less according to their own spiritual condition.

But then it is to be observed that this sense of reality will depend greatly upon the opinion which they have formed of the life and character of the preacher. They will not expect faultlessness; but palpable inconsistency between the life and utterance of the preacher will rob the latter of their effect. A speech or a sermon is always effective when the speaker and the hearer are *en rapport*. If the hearers regard the preacher with profound respect and love, and the godly help him with their prayers, in that case there will be blessed results from the preaching.

A famous preacher was once asked to what cause he would attribute the remark-

able and blessed results of his preaching
To which he replied, "When I enter the
pulpit I feel that I am borne up on the
prayers of my people." Ah! no wonder
that blessed results should follow. Surely, my
brethren in Christ, the preaching of the
Gospel of Salvation, while its holiness and
responsibility will solemnise and humble the
preacher, should yet uplift his heart with joy
and gratitude for the privilege entrusted to
him of delivering a message so loving, so
condescending, so glorious.

No preaching can be effectual unless we
believe that besides the human element, the
form, there is in the faithful preaching of the
gospel the Divine element, the Word of God,
i.e., the message of God conveyed through us
to the souls of men. So the Apostle says
(1 Thess. ii. 13), "For this cause thank we God
without ceasing, because when ye received
the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye
received it, not as the word of men, but as it
is in truth the Word of God, which effectually
worketh also in you that believe."

If we faithfully convey the gospel message, and our sermon be truly based upon Holy Scripture, brought home to men's minds and consciences by right deductions of reason, so that there is nothing in our sermon but what bears the warrant of Holy Scripture, can we not say the same? If we shrink from saying downright that it is the Word of God, it certainly conveys the Word of God: a solemn and uplifting thought which should have a powerful influence upon our manner of preaching.

What help, then, does the Apostle give us in these matters?

It is instructive to observe what rules the Apostle laid down for his own guidance with regard to his preaching at Corinth. "When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom (not with a philosophy, nor with didactic and oratorical skill) declaring to you the mystery of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It was his deliberate resolve,

adopted after thought and doubtless prayer, that he would preach in the simplest way the blessed message of the gospel, "And my speech and my preaching [*i.e.*, both the matter and the manner of his preaching] was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." He will avoid all rhetoric and everything that savoured of human cleverness and skill, for their sakes. Lest the persuasion of the hearers, if they were persuaded, should rest upon a human foundation (in which case it would be unstable), he will eliminate as far as possible the human element; that their conversion might rest upon the right foundation, conviction of sin and faith in Jesus crucified. He is deliberately resolved, having a single eye to his Master's glory and the salvation of souls, that he will not preach "in the words which man's wisdom teacheth."

And this, be it observed, not in barbarous Lycaonia, but in the wealthy, polished,

luxurious city of Corinth. "Christ sent me," he says (1 Cor. i. 17) "to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the gospel of Christ should be made of none effect," "*ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρός.*"

In St. Paul's view, if the doctrine of the Cross were preached with brilliant rhetoric, with an effort after human eloquence, it would be "emptied."

Assuredly, unless we are prepared boldly to assert that circumstances are so changed that the principles of the Apostle do not apply, all this is striking and instructive. Our one object in preaching being to save and edify souls, if we so preach that the attention and possibly the admiration of the audience is drawn to the preacher, and not to the message; if when they leave the church the people are saying "What an eloquent man, what choice language, what a charming delivery!" then the result is not effected. And the miserable thing is this, that in our self-seeking we are constantly being tempted to

preach with the very view of bringing this about. We are tempted to employ means which are calculated to attract admiration to the preacher, and so, according to St. Paul, to frustrate the very object of preaching.

If we preach written sermons, and compose a passage upon which we compliment ourselves as being particularly well done, well written, brilliant, St. Paul, I suspect, would be very likely to strike it out. He would say, "You will draw the attention of your hearers to your cleverness, your mental attainments; so their attention will be drawn off from their own souls. And so you will miss your object, which is to save their souls." It is a blunder in art to put a moving, elevating painting, a gem of art, into a too massive, elaborate, richly-gilt frame. We may have heard of the country visitor to the picture gallery being lost in admiration of the frame, and quite passing over the lovely painting.

You will not misunderstand me. I do not mean that our sermons are to be

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unconsidered effusions, or that we should not bestow care upon them. By no means. They should give clear evidence of thought; and we should try to put the old truths of the gospel in such a way as to make an impression upon the minds and the consciences of the hearers.

The language, also, is of course to be attended to. Nay, we are to do our very best in the setting forth of the saving truths of the gospel. But our aim should be, not to use language which will attract notice to itself by its beauty and literary excellence, but language which will convey the truths of the gospel with the greatest power; so that it is not so much the style that is noticed as the moving truths of salvation that are set before the minds of the hearers.

We cannot but observe what great stress St. Paul, in the passages which I have alluded to, lays upon "power." He would preach, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with spiritual "power."

Yes, the result that he aimed at was, not that his hearers should be persuaded or influenced by his human ability, but that through the simple proclaiming of the gospel the power of the Holy Ghost should be brought to bear upon their hearts and consciences. It was for this that he prayed, for this he asked his converts to pray for him.

In this point of view, how momentous is the fact that it was in tongues of fire that the Holy Ghost manifested His descent on the day of Pentecost. How instructive the fact that during the wonderful ten days which elapsed between the Ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost the Apostles did not preach a sermon, but continued in retreat, seeking in prayer and supplication for the promised gift.

But no sooner had they received the gift of the Holy Ghost than they began to preach with fire, to the salvation of many souls. How striking, too, is the fact that our Master Christ did not preach at all

until the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him.

According to the Apostle, all the gifts which are necessary for a successful ministry to souls, whether they be called gifts of "teaching," or "exhortation," or "prophecy," are gifts of the Holy Ghost, who is amongst us to carry on the work of Christ and to give life to the ministrations of the Church. We say every day, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church," the guiding, inspiring Spirit, and the Body of which He is the energising principle.

But have we a real, practical, living faith in the good and loving Holy Spirit? If so, we shall look to Him to preach through us. We shall hope that in reality the sermon may be His. Oh, how will this elevate our idea of preaching, fill us with a sense of its solemnity and our responsibility, and move us to pray! We shall pray concerning the preparation of our sermons, and pray fervently in the pulpit at the time of their delivery. Have we not often found, when

we have had to preach under anxious circumstances, when out of health, depressed by some infirmity, or distracted by some sorrow or anxiety, and have prayed with fervour for the aid of the Holy Spirit and have thrown ourselves upon God, how wonderfully we have been supported!

If we neglect prayer, the inevitable result will be that we shall trust in the instrument rather than in the power.

But, on the other hand, if we believe and remember that the great object of preaching is to save and edify souls, and that we sinful men cannot possibly save souls, though the Holy Spirit is able and willing to do this through our instrumentality—even as the organist touches the soul of the listener by his sweet music breathed through the wood and metal pipes of the organ—the result must and will be that we willingly and joyfully do our part, the mere human part; anxiously looking to Him to do the real work, the spiritual work; praying to

Him fervently to make use of us for His saving purposes.

And we shall ask in faith for great things, that the Spirit of God may speak through our poor words to the souls of each one of our hearers—that all of them may be drawn powerfully to God. Yet, knowing our weakness and liability to pride, we shall pray that if souls are benefited, we may not get the credit for our ability. In this way we shall try to speak only as the vehicle for the Divine breath; and the last words that we shall utter before we give out our text will be, “Master, help!”

It will be serviceable to us to dwell in thought upon the correspondence that there ought to be between the gospel itself and our manner of putting it before our people in preaching. There must be a harmony between the setting of the ring and the priceless jewel it contains. In the Scriptures there is no aiming after effect; literary effect seems not to be thought of.

There is power: the gospel "finds us" but it is through simplicity. Let us aim, then, not at literary effect, but at "power. "Like Evangel, like evangelist."

Yet we observe the diversified nature of the Scriptures. Take the case of St. Paul. What variety there is in his writings—denunciation of sin, attacks upon special vices, praises of God and the blessed Saviour, doctrines of faith and righteousness, deep mysteries, glowing hopes, instructions and advice, pithy sayings of inestimable practical value (Rom. xii., xiii.). These and other elements are found commingled in his writings.

So the Christian preacher finds a precedent for variety in his topics. Yet all are parts of one great theme. When listening to the Apostle, we seem to see a crucifix in the pulpit.

It is sad that some clergy think it a trouble and a burden to preach, to hear a young clergyman complaining that he does not know what to preach about, and

the middle-aged man saying that he has preached himself out. I would recommend to my younger hearers two books which will supply material for any number of sermons—the Book of God's Revelation and the book of human nature.

The man who is daily meditating on the Scriptures, and thus mentally feeding his own soul on God's revealed truth, who is daily going in and out among God's people entrusted to his charge, endeavouring to minister to their souls, this man will never lack subjects for sermons. He will be continually seeing fresh lessons of faith and piety in the gospel, and he will become acquainted with the needs, the difficulties, the troubles, the hopes, the sins and sorrows, the joys and consolations of precious souls. As he walks about his parish from house to house, fresh subjects, new points of view, apposite stories or illustrations will occur to his mind. Why, his difficulty will not be to find, but to select a subject out of many.

And in this he will desire to be guided by God's good Providence. The man who loves neither his Bible nor spiritual intercourse with his parishioners must fly for his sermons to the shallow theories and up-to-date subjects of the hour.

And in this matter do you not think, dear brethren, that we should have special regard to the poor and ill-educated? Of the Master it was said "the common people heard Him gladly." "To the poor," He Himself says, "the gospel is preached." And how simply He preached it! Is it not worthy of consideration whether in time past we may not have lost many of our poorer brethren by our too elaborate preaching? We have, in fact, preached in a tongue "not understood of the people." Can such a class as that of the labourers readily follow and take in the teaching of a sermon which is expressed in a literary style fit to be printed by the most eminent publisher and quietly read in the gentleman's study? Still more, are they likely to be moved and influenced, awed

and uplifted, by it? If not, is it at all strange that they prefer the homely but perhaps vigorous and easily understood sermon at the meeting-house? And is it, or is it not, true that the preaching is the chief strength of Dissent?

I may add my own conviction that sermons, the result of prayer and thought and study, but expressed in simple, straightforward, readily understood language, not only are better liked, but, what is much more important, are also better calculated to benefit our cultured and highly educated hearers.

One difficulty in our case arises from our social position, and our association with the educated and affluent.

These, who have plenty of leisure and books of sermons and devotion of the highest class at their disposal, apparently have not the same need of our sermons as the poor. It may be that in reality they do not care for sermons at all. Whereas the poor and hard-worked com-

monly get all their spiritual instruction and all their impulses to repentance and holiness from the weekly sermon.

We are apt to be too much influenced by what the people with whom we associate in social life, educated, cultured, but perhaps rather lukewarm Christians say "Excellent sermon, Vicar," says the Squire or his lady, "but" (with a smile) "ten minutes too long, you know." I wish our friends knew how they may thus possibly damp and discourage God's minister, who perhaps has hoped and prayed that his sermon might be blessed to the profit of some precious soul, and who by this not unkindly meant raillery becomes timid and sensitive, and hurried in his preaching.

Or, we are pleased, and ashamed of ourselves for being pleased, that our kind hostess thanks us for our "beautiful sermon." No doubt, like all men who have a part to play in public, liability to flattery is one of our snares. The well-intentioned criticism of really godly people we shall always welcome.

But the paramount thought must be that of our duty to precious souls, and the overwhelming consideration of our responsibility to God, our Judge, for every word we utter.

“With me,” says a great preacher, “it is a very small matter that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment . . . but He that judgeth me is the Lord.” Ah! solemn truth! How full of awe is the thought that God Himself is one of our audience—that He is listening to what we say about Him. To think that we, speaking as His ambassadors, may compromise His honour, and that He may repudiate what we are saying on His behalf. What a safeguard would this consideration be against all vanity, indulgence in trivialities, tricks of language, or indolent reliance upon a fatal facility of expression. Having a great desire to exercise this ministry for the glory of God, in the salvation of souls, it will be our hope and longing that our hearers will go away not thinking of us at all. Rather that they

will leave with the arrow in their consciences, silent and ashamed for sin, and nerved to fresh efforts for its subdual. Often cheered as the believing children of God, and uplifted with thoughts of the wondrous forbearing goodness of their Heavenly Father, and the love of the blessed Saviour, they will be at peace with God yet humble-minded, awed yet happy, conscious of besetting faults yet "rejoicing in hope."

Ah! my brethren, how ought we to value the privileges and joy of preaching the gospel of the grace of God.

But under the word "preaching" I would include not only our formal addresses from the pulpit, but also all oral teaching by which we endeavour to instruct our people in spiritual things. The zealous fisherman will employ every lawful means to catch the fish. *E.g.*, if we look to the Bible for hints how to do this our work, we find St. Paul directing St. Titus to preach sound doctrine to special classes—old men, young men, aged women, young women, and servants. We

find him, too (Eph. v. and vi.), preaching special sermons to various classes, pointing out to them their duties, their special dangers and temptations.

The pastor, then, here finds a precedent for giving special addresses, perhaps in Lent, to meet the special needs of special classes, and to go more into particulars than would be practicable in his general sermons. How useful to give special addresses adapted to the trials and temptations of men, youths, domestic servants, or children!

The question is often asked, and perhaps ought to be asked more often than it is, How can we combat the terrible sin of sexual immorality?—which many of us in East Anglia believe to be the most prevalent, and the most soul-destroying in its various forms, of all kinds of sin. What can be done to save precious souls from this spiritual disease?

Our reply to this question is to be found in this sad but undoubted fact, that, as a rule, boys and youths have never

received any necessary information, or any clear, definite warnings with regard to these sins. Being not forewarned, they go into the hot battle with temptation not fore-armed, and often fall, as many a parish priest knows, through ignorance; whereas we have reason to believe that, had they been properly armed, they would not have fallen. Can any consideration be sadder than that?

Do you not think, dear brethren, that Ezekiel's apologue of the watchman is appropriate here? What if the watchman, the parish priest, has neglected to blow the trumpet and do all that lies in his power to warn his people of these soul-seducing sins, and they fall, whereas they might have been saved by warning? Does not a sad and terrible responsibility lie upon him? I should hope that every conscientious parish priest makes a point of warning, with due care and prudence, the boys and youths at Confirmation, and with the utmost care and delicacy the females also.

But, with regard to the matter before us,

he may well also from time to time hold a meeting for men and youths only, and either speak to them himself or obtain the services of some discreet and experienced brother to act the part of watchman and warn the precious souls against the deadly sin.

As many of you are aware, I am myself a strong believer in the spiritual utility of "after-meetings," and used them myself for some twenty-five years in the course of my ministry. My chief reason for this has been found in the following considerations.

A chief object which we ought to have in our ministry is to influence the human will, and to induce our people, renouncing the service of sin and the world, to give their hearts and consecrate their lives to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, taking it as the paramount object of their lives to do the will of God. Every one who can look up to God in heaven, and say from the profound depths of his soul the words of the psalmist, "Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth

Thee, for Thou art my God," is a converted being.

Yet we cannot but be aware that multitudes of our church-goers have never come to this clear decision, perhaps are "halting between two opinions," certainly have no appearance of being in a state of grace, and therefore have no genuine peace and joy in their religion. Nay, even among our communicants, I cannot but fear that there are numbers who wince when they hear the priest saying in their name, "Here, O Lord, we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

Now, it should certainly be our heart's desire to bring all our people to this decision and to this peace. Yet are the ordinary means which we employ sufficient? The sermon preached may be a good, and evangelical, and moving sermon, and the people, or some of them, leave the church impressed, as the saying is, and "almost persuaded," but not quite. The impression, however

dies away, as the breath breathed upon a mirror, and no actual result ensues. Are we satisfied? Surely we ought not to be. We want to bring them to the point and to joy and peace in believing. And, believe me, a very useful means to this end is the after-meeting.

After earnest and solemn sermons, *e.g.*, in Lent, it is useful to invite those to remain who are wishful for further spiritual help. Then with moving hymns and extempore prayers (by the clergy), let an address or simple instruction be given by the clergyman. Let him mark the distinction between this meeting and the legal service of the Church by discarding his usual robes. Standing perhaps in the aisle and speaking in a simple conversational, yet truly reverent style, let him deal quietly one by one with the various difficulties and pleas which hinder souls from giving themselves up entirely to the blessed Saviour, and from "rejoicing in the liberty wherewith He hath made them free.

On rare occasions a solemn act of self-consecration may be made, and opportunities for private interviews with earnest souls. And thus, believe me, by the Divine blessing, many earnest souls may be brought to that which they are seeking, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

No doubt some of you may say that you are not competent to conduct such a meeting as this. Yet I cannot but believe that any ordained minister of the Church, with the love of Christ and of souls in his heart, can, with the power which spiritual earnestness and simplicity and prayer will give, afford in this way much help to those who need and are perhaps longing for help.

An anecdote from my own experience will illustrate the idea which I desire to convey.

A year or two ago, when coming out of our cathedral, I was cordially addressed by an elderly man, whom I at once recognised as an old friend of my early missionary days in British Columbia. He showed me a private book of prayers which I had given

him at his confirmation, forty years before, on Fraser River. During the course of the afternoon, which he spent at the Palace, he told me of the following incident:—

There was a man living in a rough little log-hut, close to my own, in one of the ravines at New Westminster looking out upon the Fraser. "Oregon Jack" was a well-known character, perhaps the greatest drunkard in the settlement. Sitting alone in his log-hut one Sunday evening, lonely and depressed, having slept off the results of a drinking-bout, he was aroused by the sound of our church-bell—at that time the only one in the colony—ringing, or perhaps I might say tolling, for the evening service.

The monotonous sound impressed itself upon his nerves, and he felt himself irresistibly drawn towards it. He came to church, the first time for many years. And my old friend added, "You conducted the service and preached, and Jack was much 'impressed.'" Mark the word. The service over, and the lamps put out, he stood in

the porch, looking out into the darkness, "impressed"; but that was all, and wanting more. He spied across the ravine the Methodist chapel lighted up, and felt drawn towards it.

So he groped his way down the ravine, climbing over the huge fallen trees and stumps, crossing the tiny brook where I used to fill my kettle, climbing the steep bank on the other side, until he pushed open the door of the chapel.

The usual service was over, and they were holding a prayer-meeting. Jack was received with a hearty cry of welcome. A moving hymn was raised and fervent prayer was made. Special entreaty was made, I doubt not, for the alien who had thus providentially wandered into the fold. The leaders came round him, got poor Jack upon his knees, and helped him to pray; and he then and there renounced his sins, and gave his heart to his Saviour. The natural and proper result was that he joined the Methodist community, and, as far as my informant

knew, maintained afterwards a sober, Christian life.

The result was matter for deep thankfulness. Yet one could not help thinking that if we had had an after-meeting, we might, by God's goodness, have had the happiness of adding "Oregon Jack" to our community.

After-meetings may also be very useful for other than what I may call converting purposes. Instruction may be given, for example, on the Prayer-book, or on the means of grace and the Sacraments.

In these various matters, beloved, which I have now put before you, I ask you to observe the blessedness of our sacred calling. It is indeed a great responsibility. Would to God, with regard to the matter of which I have been treating, that all our brethren would see the solemn responsibility of delivering faithfully, or unfaithfully not delivering, the message of God to the souls of men. We may well echo the words of the great Apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Yet how happy, how joyous was the same Apostle in the exercise of his ministry, which was indeed the same as ours! How privileged he thought himself to be! "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord," he says, "for that He hath enabled me, putting me into ministry; who before was a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy," &c.

Here are the two sides, brethren, of our ministry. Humbling because of our personal unworthiness, "Who is sufficient for these things?" What am I, poor sinful man that I am, that God should entrust me with this work, this high dignity? Ah! I have this treasure in an earthen vessel indeed. Yet it is a treasure: it is the truth, it is the happiness of men, it is salvation, it is Christ the Lord. Lord God, teach me humility. Impress upon me, more and more my own personal unworthiness. Yet deepen in me my sense of Thy great goodness, Thy loving condescension in choosing me such as I am, to be Thy minister, Thy ambassador. And

help me to exercise my sacred calling with diligence, with patience, with faith, ever to have a sense of my own shortcomings and of Thy lovingkindness, and to preach the glad tidings of salvation as a sinful man to sinful men with constancy, with humility, and with great joy.

THE PASTOR IN HIS CHURCH AND
SCHOOLS

II

THE PASTOR IN HIS CHURCH AND SCHOOLS

“I will make you fishers of men.”

THE fisherman, having his mind set upon catching the fish, will employ every instrument that he can find fit for the object that he has in view, and will not despise any that will serve his purpose. If he cannot use the seine, he will use the cast-net; if that be unsuitable, he will employ the shrimp-net; and if that be out of the question, he will angle with the rod and line.

Making use of this idea, I ask, will the spiritual fisherman be content to allow the six days between Sunday and Sunday to pass by without making any zealous

use of the net or the hook? Of course, circumstances vary. The parish priest of the town, with a town population, has, or ought to have, something going on in his church every day. "But," it is urged, "for the rural clergyman to attempt week-day services would be absurd. Nobody, or scarcely anybody, would come."

But, I would ask, is it not possible that we may be too exacting with regard to the number of people that we expect to have at our services? And if we resolve that we will not have the prayers of the Church, or preach a sermon, or give an address, unless there are a certain definite number of people present, is it not possible that we may be looking at the matter from an inadequate point of view? With regard to "daily prayers" it may of course be alleged, and in fact is alleged by many, that they can employ their time better than in going to the church and reading prayers when only one or two people will be present.

It is quite true that there is an exception

made to the order of the Church that every priest should say daily morning and evening prayers either publicly or privately. "Not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause." And again that he should say the same in the church daily, "not being otherwise reasonably hindered."

A parish clergyman cannot therefore be compelled by authority to say daily prayers in his church.

But undeniably the mind of the Church is quite clear. And it is obvious, by the injunction, that the priest should say the prayers, "if not publicly, then privately"; that the Church has in view, not only the edification of the parishioners, but also the spiritual good of the priest himself. I have no doubt at all that this is the case. If, in our rural villages, only one or two perhaps aged people come to the prayers, or possibly only members of the clergyman's own family, yet the discipline is good for the clergyman himself.

It is good for him to go regularly through

the Psalter, that devotional book of the saints, and the appointed chapters from the holy Bible. This is an excellent way of beginning the work of the day. It is good that intercessions be made for all sorts and conditions of men. True, the intercessions are made by only a few people. But they *are made*, and go up to high heaven commingled with the intercessions of God's people throughout the world.

The idea of the stranger who, looking into the church at prayer-time and seeing only a tiny gathering, remarks that it does not seem "worth while to read the service for only two or three people," or "that the parson cannot have much to do with his time when he reads the service to two or three old women," shows a misunderstanding of the nature of prayer and the blessedness of the intercessions of the Church. It is merely the utilitarian view : so few people get good that it does not seem worth while. The saying of our Lord should be borne in mind that

“where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He.”

I believe, too, that a daily offering of the sacrifice of prayer and praise has an effect even upon those that are not present. They are led to look upon their clergyman as not a mere indolent, ease-loving man, but as a man of prayer. The very sound of the church bell awakens thought; and, believe me, it is not a thing unknown for simple people, as they hear, to send up an aspiration for a blessing on those who are praying in the church. The French picture of “The Angelus” sometimes has its counterpart in rural England.

A clergyman of the Diocese told me how a shepherd once said to him, “When I am out in the fields of a morning and hear your bell going at eight o’clock, I takes off my hat and says, ‘God bless the Parson, and God bless the people.’”

Similarly of addresses or Bible-classes. Our Incarnate Lord God preached two of His most wonderful discourses to a single

individual: the one by the light of a lamp to Nicodemus, the other in the blazing afternoon sun to the dull, sensual woman by Jacob's well. I myself once heard a sermon preached only and solely for my own benefit, and was much impressed by it, and by the zeal of the preacher for my spiritual well-being.

Tiny rivulets feed the streams, and the streams feed the rivers. A little gathering of converted souls, whether in the church, or the mission-hall or schoolroom, for prayer and the hearing of the word, not only tends to the edification of the members themselves, but also has an appreciable influence upon the spiritual life of the whole parish. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"; and no better means can be adopted for raising the spiritual tone of a parish than the getting together a nucleus of really earnest, devout souls, who by prayer and work and a holy example will do all within their power to bring all their friends and neighbours under

the influence of the blessed gospel of Christ.

But we must not despise the day of small things; and I am persuaded that the way to get our people into godly practices is to begin those godly practices, and not to wait till we have reason to believe that our people are inclined to avail themselves of them. The way to get our people to attend the week-day service in church, a Bible-class, an early Communion, or a prayer-meeting, is to have it, and do our best then to make it a success, and not to postpone it until we have reason to think that they desire it.

The attendance, perhaps, may be but small. Well, if they are really believing, loving souls, what then? "When two or three are gathered together in the Master's name," there is He. And if the Lord Jesus be there with His gracious presence, shall we complain because we have a poor audience?

The number of members in a Bible-class may be but few; but it may grow. And,

if not, anyway it does the pastor himself much good, and promotes his study of the Word of God, to prepare by meditation and prayer and study for the weekly lesson.

I must confess that I am surprised and disappointed that there are not more Bible-classes in the diocese. There are a great many, but there ought to be far more. Every parish priest, however small his parish, ought to have some public means of instruction and grace going on in his parish between Sunday and Sunday.

It has been one chief object before me in my visits from parish to parish throughout the diocese to impress this upon the clergy. If there is nothing going on in the parish but the two ordinary Sunday services, how meagre is the spiritual food dispensed by the steward! A large number of the parishioners will attend only one of the Sunday services, probably in the evening, so that in actuality they only give one-ninetieth part of their time to the public worship of that Heavenly

Father to whom they owe all their blessings. This is indeed a peppercorn rent!

What I would urge upon my brethren is this, that they must be quite dissatisfied with this state of things and not rest until it is amended. We must not rest content with saying, "I wish it were otherwise; but the people won't come." We have sufficient instances to the contrary to prove that this is not generally true. The people will come when the parish priest does all that he can do and is all that he ought to be.

I do not wish to dictate too precisely what ought to be set on foot. It may be a week-day evening service in the church, with a sermon or informal instruction, or Bible-classes, or a prayer-meeting. But, I repeat, there ought to be some means of grace and instruction between Sunday and Sunday in every parish in the land.

With regard to Bible-classes, it is a mistake to suppose that they are only suitable for boys or young men. As a matter of fact, some of the very best Bible-classes in the

diocese are for adult men, mostly married. Adult men are more staunch and steadfast than youths. The course that I should recommend my brethren to follow would be this: Let the pastor go round his parish and tell every man that he is starting a class for the common study of the Word of God, and ask him if he will join it. If he is willing, let the pastor at once enter the man's name in a little book, that he may feel himself pledged. Let the meeting be held in the parsonage or school-room, decidedly the former for preference. The room must be comfortable, well warmed, and well lighted.

Great care should be taken in the choice of a book, which must be one of an intrinsically interesting character, with narrative and plenty of incident, yet full of splendid doctrine. No book can be better than the Acts of the Apostles, or one of the Gospels. After the singing of a hymn and introductory collects let the exposition be given, which should not be long—not more than

twenty or twenty-five minutes, and must be made interesting. It is not necessary to stick too closely to the verse being handled, but any illustrations or anecdotes may be brought in which will do good and keep up the interest. These should be thought of and prepared before the instruction is given. Mr. Eugene Stock's books are very useful in this respect.

And the pastor's own experience and knowledge of the needs of his flock will supply him with many thoughts. The members of the class should be encouraged to ask questions and give their opinions; but usually they are very shy. After the exposition there may be a well-known hymn and extempore prayer, making application of the subject of exposition, the whole to occupy some forty-five or fifty minutes. A good time is Sunday afternoon, if not otherwise occupied, or a week-day evening.

There are classes of this kind in parishes with a population of from 150 to 250, averaging an attendance of twenty men.

And when we consider that these men will influence their wives and children, it will be readily seen what an evangelising power we have here. Classes may be also held for youths, or young women, or men and women together, or in towns for domestic servants. Our people need more knowledge of the Scriptures, which are able to make us "wise unto salvation," and we can have no happier work, or one more helpful to our own souls, than the work of imparting to them this invaluable instruction.

Consider again the matter of open prayer-meetings. I would have you think seriously whether we must not do all that we lawfully can to meet the needs and even the idiosyncracies of all our people.

Now there are some people, earnest people of fervid temperament, who feel that a burden is laid upon them, that they must give their testimony and tell what the Lord has done for their souls. Others find a spiritual help in extempore prayer, in which the needs and aspirations and grateful praises

of the individual soul are fervently poured forth without the restriction of previously composed written prayers. Now, if confined to the ordinary services of the Church there is nothing to meet this need. And for want of it not a few have become adherents of Nonconforming bodies where they can obtain what they desire.

Those of our brethren who have made use of this instrumentality regard it as a valuable spiritual help. I think it well to record my own opinion that such a devotional meeting should be quite under the control of the parish clergyman, and none should pray except by his previous invitation. I have heard quite illiterate men offer fervent, moving, and exalted prayers to the spiritual uplifting of those present. But unless some precaution be taken, they may pray in a manner which is disconcerting and out of harmony with the feeling of the meeting. Personally, I should be of opinion that none but communicants of the Church should be invited to pray.

I would deprecate any cut-and-dried plan upon such a subject as this. If no other method can be adopted, cannot the clergyman get one or two devout praying souls to meet together in his own study for mutual prayer and intercession? If not, should he not have some searchings of heart? What! Not two or three converted souls in the parish who believe in prayer, and are glad of the opportunity of meeting together for prayer to the common Father, Him who has said by His Son, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." Oh, if so, how sad!

It may be said, "They meet in church on Sundays." True, perhaps once in seven days, but is that enough to satisfy earnest souls? Is not the gap between Sunday and Sunday too wide? Ah, my brethren, we are disposed to set our standard too low. And hence the low average of spirituality among our people. We must endeavour to lift them higher, upward, heavenward. And, I ask,

is the ordinary service of the Church on one day only of the week sufficient, and all that we can give them?

My brethren, what we need in all these things is intense interest in the spiritual welfare of all those entrusted to our charge. If there be this warm, spiritual love to the brethren, then all will be well. We shall leave no stone unturned to promote their spiritual welfare.

Mark the intense interest which St. Paul had in the spiritual well-being of his converts, those whom he had begotten in Christ; how he mourned for their backslidings and failures, and what real joy he had—how often does that word occur in this connection!—for their perseverance and growth in holiness. “My brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved.” “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, making my supplication with joy for your fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel.” “You are our glorying in

the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanksgiving can we render unto God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?" "The Lord make you to abound in love one toward another—even as we also do towards you." Have we the like feelings towards the members of our flock who ought to be so precious to us?

The spiritual fisherman must fish with every kind of net and use every bait that will take. There is nothing too small for us which has any real bearing upon our great work of ministering to immortal souls. The same God who places the stars, the myriad worlds, in the firmament, paints the colour upon the tiny beetle's wing. Christ our Master attends even to the small wants of His people, gives commandment that Jairus's daughter shall have "something given her to eat," and works a mighty miracle in a spot where there is "much grass" for the people to sit down

upon. The greatest general weighs his soldier's knapsacks. So in our parish work, or the arrangement of our services, we shall attend to everything that will tell.

Let us dwell a little upon that latter point, scrupulous care and forethought in the conduct of the services of the Church. Let me touch rapidly upon a few items.

Are not the opening sentences of matins and evensong more or less appropriate for different seasons and occasions? Do we not feel a slight sense of incongruity when the Divine service on Easter Day or Ascension Day begins with the sentences from the fifty-first Psalm, instead of "to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses"?

Or consider how differently the "general confession" may be rendered, and how different in consequence is the effect produced upon the minds of the congregation! Do we not sometimes hear it said in monotone rapidly on a high note, perhaps even accompanied by the organ (to my mind most incongruous), the boys reciting at the top of

their voices, slurring over the syllables and running some words into others, thus showing they have not been properly taught to recite carefully?

How far more solemn and reverent is the Confession, and how different is the effect produced, when it is recited upon quite a low note, somewhat slowly, quietly, and reverently! Then it appears really as a solemn penitent confession of sins felt and bewailed.

The more I have seen of the services of the Church in the rural districts, the more doubtful I have become of the advisability of the habitual chanting of the Psalms in all our churches. I perceive not infrequently labourers, aged men, standing without Prayer-books in their hands while the Psalms are being sung, perhaps having but poor sight, perhaps not able to read with ease, and I think how dull the service, chanted perhaps throughout, must be to them; and I wonder where the other aged and illiterate people of the village are, and why they are not at church. Surely

these are just the people for whom we should have special consideration.

The impression upon my mind is that there are no services which are more generally and heartily rendered than those in which the only portions sung are the Canticles and hymns. If it is thought well that the Psalms should be chanted, there is no necessary reason why they should be chanted both morning and evening, nor indeed, as far as I can perceive, why one or more should not be chanted and the others read. It is very difficult for many of our people to join in the chant. But I would wish the whole matter of the music to be carefully and dispassionately considered by my brethren of the clergy, with a single aim to the edification of the people, which is to the glory of God.

You are aware that ever since I have been in the diocese I have lifted up my voice against that artificial style of music and singing, which I believe to be consistent neither with the spiritual interests nor

even the wishes of, at least, large portions of our people. And as the years have rolled by I have found my weak voice strengthened by utterances more powerful than mine. Our Metropolitan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his late charge, dwelt emphatically upon this point, quoting Sir Walter Parrett, an unimpeachable authority, that "the Church is suffering much from bad music and from too much music." Elaborate music even if well sung, which is not by any means always the case, may, perhaps, be liked by a few, though whether it really tends to their spiritual benefit may be questioned; it is only borne with by many, and it alienates some.

The object of singing in the congregation is not to draw admiration to the singers, nor to give pleasing sensations to the listeners, but to glorify God by lifting upward on the voice of song the hearts of the worshippers in praise and adoration to the loving Father in Heaven. And I would submit that this object is best

achieved by the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," in which all can join with voice and thankful heart.

I cannot but think that the deciding consideration should be, not what a certain portion of our congregations, particularly the well-to-do people, like, but what is for the best spiritual interest of our parishioners, especial thought being given to our poorer friends.

Before passing from the Psalms I may add that I find myself unable to sympathise with those who would expurgate them by eliminating those expressions which are termed "imprecations." Some of these expressions are susceptible of a Christian explanation, such as those of the 109th Psalm, the most striking and unacceptable of all. These, as is evident (so at least it appears to me) from the structure of the whole Psalm, and the change from the plural to the singular, and again from the singular to the plural, refer to the bitter curses uttered by wicked men, his enemies, against the psalmist, and therefore

do not at all represent his thoughts and feelings.

At the same time we cannot but admit that in that most wonderful, and on the whole most spiritual and edifying, book of the Psalms there are here and there expressions which are not consonant with the Christian spirit. So in the same way there are chapters in the other Old Testament Scriptures in which actions are apparently eulogised which the disciple of Christ cannot but repudiate. All these teach us that the revelation of God, and in consequence the religion of believers in one God, has been progressive.

Therefore, in looking back upon the religious ideas of long-passed ages, reason suggests to us that we must make allowance for the fact that the people of old lived, not in the broad daylight of Christianity, but in the comparatively dim twilight of the preparatory ages. This being understood, I do not believe that any isolated passages in the Psalms can do

harm or injure the Christian sentiment. On the other hand, we know that in actuality the Psalter has been the spiritual food for all the greatest saints of Christendom.

Proceeding with our present subject, the rendering of every part of the divine service as well as we can, how careful shall we be in reading the Lessons from Holy Scripture. We shall be anxious to be heard by every one, and that without difficulty.

It is not amiss, when standing at the lectern before beginning to read the chapter, to cast one's eye upon some one at the further end of the church, and say to oneself mentally, "I have so to read that that person can hear and understand the sacred words."

We shall take care to know the Greek forms of the proper names which occur in the Lessons, and not shock or amuse our laymen, some of whom are highly educated men, by false quantities in reading Rom. xvi.

From this point of view I cannot but

regard with some jealousy the growing practice of entrusting the reading of the Lessons to a layman. If indeed the clergyman be aged, or in delicate health, and the layman be a man of high character and good education, this may be quite allowable. But the layman may be a man of inferior education; or perhaps, after the refined reading of the educated clergyman, the broader accents of the uncultured man jar upon the ear. And this may appear to give the notion that the reading of Holy Scripture is put in an inferior position.

Similarly, if we have a choral service we shall take pains to chant the service as well as we possibly can. This is a matter which cannot be done by the light of nature. In my judgment all clergy, except those few who are themselves accomplished musicians, should not attempt to intone the divine service until they have had some instruction from those competent to teach them.

If we preach written sermons we shall take

care to know them so well before we get into the pulpit that we shall make no slips in delivering them, and shall not be obliged to pin our eyes to the MS. before us. I have known clergy who could do this so well that it was not easy to say whether the sermon were written or extempore.

We shall also take pains in the selection of the hymns, taking care to make them appropriate to the season and to the subject of the sermon. Have we not sometimes heard the effect of a solemn and moving sermon, perhaps on death or judgment or the Passion of our dear Lord, sadly marred by the jubilant hymn which immediately followed, and which entirely dissipated the salutary emotions which had been aroused. The hymn should be chosen which will harmonise with, and bring home to the heart, the teaching of the sermon. For this cause I do not think it expedient to publish beforehand, perhaps in the parish magazine, the hymns which will be sung in the following

weeks. I think also that a strange preacher should always be asked if there be any particular hymn which he desires should be sung after his sermon.

There should be a certain harmony of teaching and feeling, according to the season and special Lesson of the day, about every service. Whether it be of a festal or penitential character, the hymns, the chants, the sermon, even the altar-cloth and hangings of the sanctuary, the voluntary upon the organ, should all present one consistent and harmonious whole, that the impression made upon the mind may be definite, instructive, and impressive.

I trust my elder and experienced brethren will pardon my just touching upon these various points, which doubtless are very familiar to them, my object being both to give practical advice to our younger brethren, and also to illustrate by means of these details my principle that we should do everything we can by care and forethought to make all our ministrations as effective as

possible for the worthy end which we have in view.

Carrying the same principle into another subject, how careful should we be in fulfilling all the rubrical directions of the Prayer-book. For instance, I am afraid there are multitudes of our people who have no idea, because they were never taught in classes or instructions, that there is any useful or intelligent reason to be given for the directions to the minister, sometimes to stand up, sometimes to kneel down, and sometimes to "turn to the people," implying that previously he had not been looking towards the people.

To many, I fear, all this seems utterly purposeless, and if purposeless, then irrational and foolish. But the loyal churchman cannot believe that these directions were issued by the Church with no object at all. And the intelligent churchman, even if he heard no explanations in his youth, will perceive that in these directions there is always an underlying principle. It will

be clear to him that standing is the right attitude of dignity and authority for God's minister engaged in that which is peculiar to the office of an ordained priest, *i.e.*, as Bishop Pearson teaches, in oblation, intercession, and benediction.

Thus the attitude of standing is the normal use in the administration of the Sacraments. The minister stands during the Communion office because he is offering the Christian Sacrifice. For a similar reason he stands for the administration of the other great gospel Sacrament, Baptism. He stands after the second Lord's Prayer, at Matins and Evensong, because the versicles are intercessory. He stands throughout the office of Holy Matrimony and does not kneel down once, because it is an office of benediction, with no penitential element about it. He stands always to pronounce the absolution since it comes under the head of benediction.

Whereas, when not acting in his official capacity as a priest, but, as an individual, a

sinful man, he confesses his sins or is saying a penitential office, he kneels.

Thus he kneels at the confessions and in the saying of the penitential Litany. Similarly, when declaring the message of God to his people, he is to look towards them. But he is not to look thus to them when he is presenting, as the representative of the people, these petitions to the most High.

With regard to this latter point, you will remember the principle laid down by the Bishops at the Savoy Conference (A.D. 1661). The Puritan representatives objected to the change of attitude on the part of the priest, sometimes turning to the people and sometimes away from them, and wished to have the rubrics in the Communion office changed. They asserted that "the minister turning himself to the people is most convenient throughout the whole ministration." This the Bishops met by a direct negative. "The minister's turning to the people is *not* most convenient throughout the whole

ministration. When he speaks to them, as in lessons, absolutions and benedictions, it is convenient that he turn to them. When he speaks for them to God, it is fit that they should all turn another way, as the ancient Church ever did" (see St. Aug., Book II., on the "Sermon on the Mount").

Now, this being the principle laid down by the revisers of our Prayer-book, and since the directions of the Church are all to be scrupulously observed, such rubrics as these—the priest turning to the people "to say the Commandments," "turning himself to the people for the absolution," "turning" again to the Lord's Table for the sanctus, "kneeling down at the Lord's Table for the Prayer of Humble Access," "standing before the Table previous to the Consecration Prayer"—will all fall at once into their proper place, and contribute harmoniously and in an edifying manner to the carrying out of the instructive principle which underlies them all.

How clearly and usefully do these rubrics,

when thus intelligently treated, remind us of our twofold office, (1) that we, the ministers of the people, possessing in a concentrated form, as I may say, the priesthood possessed by the body of God's believing people, are put forward by them to minister on their behalf before God; and (2) that we, as God's ministers ordained by Him, are empowered by a special *charisma* of the Holy Ghost to declare His message and to hand to His people from Him the blessed spiritual gifts of His Sacraments.

With what solemn thoughts, then, should we stand before the altar of God! We are like Moses when he went up to Mount Sinai to meet the Lord, or like the High Priest entering into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

Then observe, too, how carefully the priests of the Old Testament required to be purified before offering sacrifice. To suppose that the directions of the law, framed according to the Divine will—though no longer obligatory on us—

are trivial and of no account, is surely an unworthy view and derogatory to the Divine majesty. Think, then, of the minute directions by which the approach to the altar was fenced in, *e.g.*, "The priests shall be clothed with linen garments, no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the Sanctuary; they shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat." What pains were taken to enforce the duty of awful reverence! Does not the English priest sin against this principle when he rushes to the altar from some domestic scene, or hurries in to early Communion after a hasty toilet, and without any preparation of prayer?

The special grace that we need in this respect is that we should serve God acceptably with reverence (*εὐλαβεία*) and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 28, 29). It is a striking thought that this awe or godly fear is specified as one of the attributes of our great High Priest. It is one of the sevenfold gifts of

the Holy Spirit (Isaiah xi. 2) which shall rest upon the rod of the stem of Jesse. "The spirit of the fear of the Lord."

The Apostle to the Hebrews pointedly adduces this as a meritorious cause of the success of his high-priestly intercession. "When he had offered up prayers and supplications—*δεησεῖς τε και ικετηρίας προσενέγκας*—we observe the sacrificial word—with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard for his godly fear—*ἄπο τῆς εὐλαβείας*." Bishop Westcott says that *εὐλάβεια* marks that careful and watchful reverence which pays regard to every circumstance in that with which it has to deal. "A reverent and thoughtful shrinking from over-boldness." These words admirably express the awful shrinking from over-familiarity with sacred things which ought to characterise the priest in dealing with the sacred mysteries.

This feeling of godly fear is one of the characteristics of the beautiful ancient

Greek Liturgies. "We fall down before Thee full of fear and dread, about to offer this Holy Sacrifice for our sins, negligences, and ignorances" (Lit. St. James). "Grant unto us that with great fear and a pure conscience (*μέτα πάντος φοβοῦ καὶ συνειδήσεως καθαρᾶς*) we may offer to Thee this spiritual and unbloody sacrifice" (Lit. St. Basil). It is in a spirit of solemnity and awe that we stand before God to minister to Him. Let us look to it whether we have not been guilty of over-familiarity with sacred things. Let us pray for the grace of godly fear.

We must carry this principle of doing everything as well as we can into every department of our pastoral work. In the Saviour's special love for little children, the only instance of His special love for a class, the pastor will thankfully find a warrant for giving special attention to the lambs of his flock.

What great opportunities for doing good are presented by the day-school! We know

not for how long we may have this opportunity of advancing God's work, for our political opponents appear resolved that, if they can get their way, the clergyman shall have no influence in the schools, and Church doctrine shall not be taught even in schools which we have built and managed. We know not the issue of the present controversy, how it will end. We must contend to the last, in the name of religious liberty, for the right to teach the truths of the Church to those children whose parents wish them to be so taught; and in the meanwhile, while we have liberty, do our duty to God's dear children entrusted to our care.

My own strong conviction is that the parish priest should thankfully take upon himself the blessed work of instructing the children in Christian doctrine, instead of relegating it to the paid teachers, and that for several reasons: (1) the religious instruction is thus lifted up above the ordinary subject of the secular curriculum. "Read-

ing, writing, and arithmetic are taught by the paid teachers. The rector teaches us religion."

(2) The teachers, unless really godly people, which indeed many of them are, are tempted to push into the background a subject which does not "pay."

(3) Many of them are not really competent to teach the doctrines of the Church, inasmuch as they are only imperfectly acquainted with them themselves, whereas the parish priest both knows Church doctrine himself and knows, or ought to know, how to impart it.

(4) The clergyman has thus a golden opportunity of instilling "sound doctrine" into the minds of the young and also of winning their hearts. If he have the grace of love for children, they will love him, will always welcome him with bright looks and little signs of affection. And so he fills his Sunday School and Band of Hope, and brings many of them to the church, and fills his Confirmation classes, and drafts them off afterwards

into one of his Bible-classes or the parochial guild. His school indeed will give the pastor many opportunities of useful spiritual work. For one thing, he can provide that all the children in the school are taught private prayers according to their capacities: an invaluable step to take, for careless parents utterly neglect their duty in this respect. By contrast, what a loss it would be to the religion and morality of the land if, the Church schools being abolished, the children of the land were dismissed from school knowing no prayer and having never been taught to pray!

(5) The pastor who thus does his duty in "feeding with milk the babes of the flock" will have a good reason, or excuse, for calling upon the parents and speaking about the children and their progress; and they will be prepossessed in his favour, for they have heard of him from their children. And thus there will be many openings for bringing spiritual influence to bear upon precious souls. He will be careful also to give instructions—

say by a weekly class—to the pupil-teachers and monitors in the doctrines of the Church.

The pastor will make his Sunday School as efficient as he can; and to that end will give a weekly instruction to the teachers on the subject of the following Sunday, and will perhaps, if in a town, have the heads of his instruction lithographed or type-written and a copy given to each teacher.

He will impress upon the Church people the great importance, nay the sacredness, of the office of the Sunday-school teacher, and will admit his teachers to their office with a simple service of prayer. He will try to provide that the children may be visited in their own homes, and looked up, if for any reason they have been absent from the Sunday School. This is essential. It is not very uncommon for children to be taken away from the Church school and sent to another, because when they were poorly and absent from school no one called to know the reason why. "They cannot have much

interest in the children at that school," it has been said.

The pastor will also have the children brought to the church, where, after careful preparation both on his part and theirs, he will catechise them on the fundamental truths of the faith. He will moreover instruct them, not only on those essential truths which are common to all Christians, but also in the characteristic doctrines of the Church, that they may go forth from the Sunday School with an intelligent attachment to the Church.

And in his addresses he will take care to weave lessons of morality and virtue, and the value and necessity of Christian practices, such as prayer, and of Christian graces, such as truthfulness and gentleness, humility and love. Thus he will, like a good pastor, himself feed with spiritual food the babes of the flock.

In the same spirit he will desire to make the utmost use of the precious opportunities afforded him by the blessed ordinance of Confirmation.

It is difficult to overrate the value of Confirmation, inasmuch as it is the only ordinance in which all the future communicants of the Church are brought individually into intimate relations with their clergyman. He will then have a twofold object in view—evangelical and didactic. He will desire in the power of the grace of God to bring his catechumens to a true conversion, *i.e.*, he will try to bring them to a decision for Christ and His service, so that, realising their own soul's needs, and the love of God in Christ, they may with all the earnestness of their being take it as their great and paramount object in life to do the will of God.

There are those, I am aware, who take what I may call a narrow view of Confirmation, and would maintain that to obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit it is enough for a child to know the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, which indeed makes the preparation only one of intellectual knowledge; the heart and the conscience being left altogether out of the matter. From this

inadequate view, as I hold, I must express my entire dissent. To me it is evident that the Church demands far more than this when she requires that the catechumens, before the laying on of hands, must publicly, before God and the angels and the Church, make over again the far-reaching and most solemn vows of their baptism.

These vows, once in infancy made for them, they now make on their own personal responsibility. And assuredly the Church intends that in making these solemn vows they should know the meaning of the words, and understand what they are pledging themselves to; which precludes the confirming of quite young children—for what do they understand of the vanities of the world and the lusts of the flesh?—and also that they should fully and heartily mean the vows that they make. And this they cannot do merely on the score of their intellectual knowledge. They cannot really mean these vows unless they make their choice for God's service, and set themselves reso-

lutely to do His holy will—unless, in short, they give their hearts to God. To bring this about, therefore, in the power of the grace of God, should be the pastor's chief aim.

Yet he will also endeavour to instruct their minds with the knowledge of all necessary doctrine, and will use the opportunity to warn them against the sins to which they are the most liable.

Thus, in going through with them the threefold vow which they now renew, he will explain to them, under the head of "the renunciation of the devil," the nature of temptation, and the imperative duty of casting out evil thoughts, those bombshells cast by the great enemy into the fortress of the soul, ere they develop into sinful acts; he will faithfully and carefully set before them the meaning of the renunciation of the "poms and vanities of the world," showing them that while they may lawfully enjoy in moderation, and in subservience to the great object of life, whatever innocent pleasure

may fall in their way, yet that their heart must not be given to mere pleasures and earthly enjoyments. But the heart must be given to the Saviour, and the deliberate object of the life must be to do the will of God.

The faithful pastor will also feel it his duty, for the subject is directly brought before him in the Christian vow, to warn those who are of proper age against the "sinful lusts of the flesh."

No need to say that this duty, undertaken for the love of precious souls, must be performed with scrupulous care and forethought, as well as with fidelity. To the females the subject may be treated with delicacy upon the positive side, the sacredness of the body being dwelt upon as being indeed "the temple of the Holy Ghost."

With the young men plainer dealing is feasible and desirable. They should be warned, in careful but plain language, against the more common and deadly forms of carnal sin.

Surely this appears to be an absolute duty, for the subject is brought forward by the Church in the Confirmation vow. And if the subject be passed over the result will be—for, alas! the fathers seldom do their duty in this matter—that the young men, perhaps with strong passions, will be plunged into the midst of violent temptations to these soul-destroying sins without having any warning whatsoever, and perhaps without a clear apprehension of the heinousness of the sins. Many a boy suffers from mere ignorance.

Here is one reason why I have always discouraged the Confirmation of quite young boys. They go into temptation unwarned.

I have sometimes invited a doctor, a good Christian man, to give the elder young men an address at Confirmation time on “the use and abuse of the body.”

For the necessary instruction on Christian doctrine the pastor will go through, under the head of the second vow, the articles of the Creed, and will do his best to drill

the young people thoroughly in the chief doctrines of Christianity and of the Church. Thus he will find many all-important subjects ready to his hand: the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the true Deity of our Lord—which needs emphatic teaching in these days—the Atonement, “was crucified, dead, and buried”—conversion, “the forgiveness of sins”—the Church, “the Holy Catholic Church,” &c.

Under that last head the young people should be reminded that at their Confirmation they have once for all, by their own voluntary action, given in their adherence to the Church of this land, and are bound to remain loyal members of it. If young people are never shown reasons why they should remain faithful to the Church, they will perceive no reason why they should remain within her fold, and may perhaps wander from sect to sect until they lose on their journey nearly all belief in definite truth, and sink down perhaps, like so many, into irreligion and indifference.

Thorough instruction will also be given by the zealous pastor upon the Sacraments and means of grace. In the latter years of my ministry my practice was to give but one good instruction on Holy Communion before the Confirmation. But after the Confirmation and previous to the first Communion, to give five or six instructions on that Sacrament, teaching the young people the doctrine of the Church, giving them directions of a practical character, and going through the Office for Holy Communion with comments and explanations. And I am satisfied that this is a useful plan.

The pastor will be most anxious to promote the personal religion of his candidates, and will therefore deal with them not only in the aggregate but also individually. Indeed, he will find in the whole of his ministry that public, common ministrations require to be followed up by personal dealing. Otherwise, oftentimes impressions will have been made that will die out fruitless. He trusts that by the grace of

the Holy Spirit impressions will have been made through his address upon the consciences and hearts of his young hearers.

But he desires to clinch the matter by bringing them to the point of giving up themselves wholly to the blessed Saviour and His service. He knows, too, that some of them need other help, as in combating their besetting faults. Thus he will interview them privately, wishing to afford them spiritual help. He will find, if he has done the part of the faithful pastor, that some of them, though perhaps somewhat shy, will be right glad of help such as he can give, and will tell him of their troubles.

¶ He will not press them to make a formal confession. For this, as he feels, he is not warranted in doing. And he knows that confessions, when made under pressure, as if a matter of bounden duty, are liable to be unreal, and, indeed, hypocritical, and in such a case are very injurious to the soul. Whereas, indeed, they are most helpful when spontaneous, and actuated by a genuine longing for spiritual help.

So, while inviting their confidences and showing himself desirous of being useful to them—especially to the boys and young men—he will be careful to let them know that the question whether they will seek his aid or not is to be decided by themselves, and that his only desire is from love of their souls to be of such use to them as he may. And from time to time he will be cheered by the happy belief that, through the mercy of God's Holy Spirit, he has been the means of leading precious souls to Christ their Saviour.

One of the most difficult duties of the parish clergyman is the ministration of alms and charitable offerings to the poor.

I cannot pretend to say that in my own ministry I have succeeded in solving all its difficulties and dangers. (i) The ideal plan is that the clergyman himself should give away nothing, but should contrive that the alms for the poor should be dispensed by the laity, godly charitable wise men and women. And this, I believe, is so managed in a few parishes in London, and probably elsewhere.

But in many parishes this cannot be done. In my own parish in Liverpool our plan was : No *money* was given, except by the clergy out of their own pockets, but orders were given upon respectable and trustworthy tradesmen. The churchwardens provided tiny cheque-books (with counterfoils), which they gave to the clergy and district visitors. Orders were thus given to the tradesmen for meat, coals, or groceries ; the counterfoils being carefully filled and preserved. Every quarter the orders, or tickets, were sent in to the churchwardens, who noted them carefully and paid the tradesmen.

But this system requires careful watching. Tradesmen should be selected who are both shrewd and friendly, who will report any well-grounded suspicions that they may have as to the character or behaviour of the ticket-holders. And an eye must be kept upon the district visitors, some of whom, especially the younger of them, are inclined to be too credulous and soft-hearted, and liable to be imposed upon.

There are some rules in this matter in which I think most experienced parish priests would concur, *e.g.*, give to those of whose deservings you are sure, those who are undoubtedly in need without any fault of their own, such as the aged, impotent, sick, bed-ridden, children, and give liberally, not merely necessaries, but comforts; make their afflicted lives as bearable as you possibly can, do everything possible to relieve their distress.

But as for the able-bodied, probably the less you give the better. It is highly injurious, out of mere good-nature, to patronise the strong, sap their spirit of independence, and incline them to rely, not upon self-help, but on charity.

It is certainly very undesirable for the pastor himself, when visiting spiritually any poor family, to give money. This may give rise to deceit and hypocrisy, anyway it causes confusion between spiritual and temporal help, so that the pastor cannot tell whether his visit is valued because of his prayers or his money.

Some of us remember the caustic illustration in a comic periodical. There is the old woman sitting in her cottage, addressing the curate standing at the door: "Yes, lad, ye may coom in, and ye may say a short prayer, and ye may gie me a shilling, and then ye may go away."

I am afraid the picture is but too true. The two spheres must not be confounded. The visit of God's minister should be purely a spiritual visit, intended for the help and blessing of the precious, immortal soul. "To the poor," says our great Example, not "money is given," but "the gospel is preached."

No doubt the pastor's heart is often touched by the obvious signs of want in the household which he visits. Well then, let him leave the house without having given the needed money, and then let him send the required relief through the district visitor, or his wife, or some other servant of the Church. Naturally the very poor are wishful to get money for the supply of

their wants, or those of the sick one, but I am quite sure that this regarding of the parish clergyman predominantly in the light of a "relieving officer" is in the highest degree injurious to our spiritual work.

And we are primarily physicians, not of bodies, but of souls. The Lord, our great Example, came amongst us not because we are poor and afflicted, but because we are lost. He came not to cure our sicknesses, but to save our souls. Yet, like Him, we should try to mitigate all the sorrows of humanity.

The common idea, I think, among the clergy of the past was this: that the primary duty of the clergyman was to dispense "relief" to the poor. And the idea has not died out yet. The clergy and their good wives distributed money and creature comforts among the poor. And it was supposed, or hoped, that this would move them to gratitude, and to "come to church," and if they did not "come to church" they were voted ungrateful.

A grievous error this, and productive of harmful results. It fostered the false and hurtful notion that persons "come to church" not so much to glorify God and for their own spiritual good, as to pay a compliment to the Church and gratify the parson. We still have, alas! too much of this idea. Those whom the clergyman has offended stop away from church and think that they have wounded him by doing so. The artizan, when the vicar calls upon him, obligingly says, "Well, I will look in upon you now and then!"

And I may remark in passing, we sometimes hear it said, in a somewhat analogous way, that people of wealth and position, the Squire and his lady, ought to come to church "for the sake of example"; whereas they should worship God primarily for their own sakes and for the Lord's sake, to "ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto His name."

But with regard to those who receive doles from the Church, and are supposed, therefore,

to be bound, out of gratitude to the clergyman, to attend his ministrations—an unworthy idea—it may be well to observe that our knowledge of human nature shows us that people are never enthusiastic on behalf of an institution which makes no demands upon them.

In former times the Church made no demands upon her people, either upon their time and energies or upon their means. It has been the boast in many of our parishes that the people were never asked to work for the Church or permitted to give to the Church. And so the idea sprang up in the minds, especially of our villagers, that if anything needed doing in the church the clergyman should do it: "That is what he gets the tithe for." The result of this has naturally been that the people have had no real and living interest in the Church. It is something lying outside their interests. It is different with the Dissenting chapel: it has been built by the efforts of the people and with the people's money. Thus numbers of

the people feel "they have a brick in it." They club together to support the chapel and pay the minister; so they have a living interest in it. Every man feels that he is a part of the concern, and they are all identified with it and its success, and so work for it and deny themselves for it, and, doubtless, pray for it.

And the result is that their zeal for the chapel and its work is often far greater than the zeal of the Church people for the Church, though it is the latter, not the former, which bestows temporal benefits upon its adherents. This, and the more simple, homely, downright preaching, are, in my opinion, the two chief causes of the strength of Dissent in our rural districts. In proportion as our own people find the Church to be, not a mere "relieving" institution, but a spiritual help and blessing, and they are permitted and encouraged to work for the Church, and spend time for the Church, and give to the Church, so in proportion will they have a real living in-

terest in the Church, and be identified with her and her prosperity, and increase in love and loyalty to her.

While on this topic I may remark that another reason why not a few of our people are more drawn to the Nonconforming bodies than to the Church is this, that there is said—and I believe with much truth—to be a stronger sense of brotherhood amongst them.

Is it not sometimes the case that people may attend the same church for years, and kneel together at the altar, and stretch out their hands together to receive the Bread of Life, and know each other perfectly well by sight, but in no other way, never greeting each other, never grasping each other's hands in friendly spirit, having, apparently, no real living interest in each other's welfare, perhaps never even speaking to each other. Even making some allowance for our national stiffness and coldness, this is surely very sad, and ought not to be. We should be thankfully conscious of our

brotherhood in Christ, our common Saviour, and "loving the brotherhood," feel genuine sympathy and love for those who are one with us in Christ, and with whom we hope to live hereafter in the realm of which the Lord is King.

Desiring to foster this sense of brotherhood, which is so strikingly put before us in the writings of the New Testament, we shall desire to promote all the means by which it will be encouraged and developed. And thus we shall be led to forward any movement which tends to develop the social element in the system of the Church.

Social gatherings, when rightly conducted, tend beyond doubt to get rid of unnecessary and harmful dividing lines of stiffness, pride, and egoism, and to promote Christian unity. A common meal—say a parochial tea—in which all classes take part upon the proper footing of equality in Church membership, is very useful in this point of view.

But the tea must not be the gift of the

Squire or the Rector. That would impart the character of benevolence, and that again leads to the idea of obligation. Whereas we are now considering means to encourage and develop the idea of brotherhood. And having that idea in mind, the motto for the social gathering should be the grand motto of Cornishmen, "One and all." All should be invited to contribute and all to partake.

In the country the farmers and other well-to-do people will contribute the more expensive articles of food. The labourers' wives will gladly present their offerings of cakes—at least, such has been my own experience in Yorkshire. The board is spread by the efforts of all. There will be music and singing, a speech from the Rector upon some subject connected with the Church, and perhaps also from a neighbouring clergyman who has the gift of racy utterance. And all depart after a pleasant evening with the sense of oneness in the Church. Some good cause, too, will have benefited by the charge made for admission.

In the same point of view much good will accrue in town parishes from sales of work.

I am aware that some of our brethren are strongly opposed to these efforts on the double ground that there is sometimes much frivolity at "bazaars," and that people ought to give to good works without the inducement of getting a *quid pro quo*. But a sale of work can be conducted properly without follies and frivolities, and persons can be invited to give to the good work on hand freely and without any inducement.

On the other hand, a combined effort, such as a sale of work, enables a large number of persons to contribute who otherwise could not give to the good cause, especially the two great classes of the women and the poor. The vast majority of women are not persons of independent means, but are dependent upon husbands or fathers. The man may, perhaps, give money, but the wife and daughter cannot do so; but they can give their work, and,

at a trifling cost for materials, they can produce goods which, in the aggregate, will furnish a considerable sum. And they are the better and the happier for the fact that they have been able to help forward the good cause.

So also with regard to those whom we call relatively "the poor." Day after day the pastor's wife is delighted at seeing one poor woman after another coming up the walk that leads to the Vicarage, carrying a basket containing, as she knows, "more things for the sale of work." And the basket is opened, and the "things" brought out with exclamations of thanks and pleasure, and the poor soul goes away thankful.

Perhaps a woman who in times of sickness has received help from the Church, being a skilful seamstress, does some exquisite piece of work, having, it may be, obtained money from the fund for the materials, dresses a doll which sells for about a sovereign. Then who so happy as she!

Another good soul who has made her humble offering brings to the sale her old crony, who, to their mutual delight, purchases it. So the good people are not only made happy, but are benefited by having been drawn more to the good cause which they have aided. And the sale itself draws people more together. The various grades of society meet together with a common object. It is another case of "One and all."

Perhaps the sale will be held in Easter week, when the schoolroom will be available; and believing Christian hearts are aglow with Easter happiness; and the young people are there who were confirmed in Lent, and have just made their first Communion. And the spirit of good-will is abroad. And all endeavour to make the meeting successful and happy, and are drawn to "love the brotherhood" as they realise the helpful feeling that the Church is their common home.

THE PASTOR IN HIS VISITING

III

THE PASTOR IN HIS VISITING

THE pastor, in his intercourse with his people, will in various ways be brought face to face with the fact which grieves, and at the outset of his ministry startles him, that there are not a few people—more in some localities than in others—who have never been baptized. In some instances this will be the case with persons who, in some way or other, have come under the influence of the Baptist persuasion. Yet more frequently it is the result of mere neglect. They were not baptized in infancy through the negligence of their parents.

Since then they have never realised the importance and blessedness of the holy sacrament so strongly as to move them to

face the trouble and the trial involved in the baptism of an adult. This light estimation of holy baptism, which would indeed have surprised and horrified the early writers of the Christian Church, is, I suppose, partly owing to the solifidian tendencies of much of our modern religionism. "It is Christ that saves us," it is said; "not water-baptism." But yet more it is owing, I believe, to mere ignorance, either of the teaching of holy Scripture, or of the doctrine of the Church. And this ignorance is owing to a lack of definite teaching either to the young children in the school or in the sermons preached in church. How many of our teachers give definite instruction to the children concerning the spiritual blessings conferred in holy baptism? Or, I might ask, How many of us have heard—shall I say six, or three—sermons preached upon the necessity, the blessedness, and the spiritual gifts of this holy sacrament during our whole life? It was the subject of much of the preaching at the time of the

Gorham controversy; but I do not think that since that date I have heard one sermon dealing comprehensively with the subject. The result is that numbers of our people attach but very slight importance to it, and regard the grace-conferring sacrament as a "mere form." Thus we find that numbers of our candidates for confirmation are unbaptized, and a certain number of those who desire to be married.

From time to time, certainly, holy baptism should be administered publicly in the course of Divine service, as, for example, on Whit-Sunday. Care should be taken for the reverent administration of the sacrament in private. Proper accessories should be provided. A table should be decently covered with a white cloth. The celebrant should wear a surplice and stole. And care should be taken concerning the vessel containing the water. For myself, I have been in the habit of taking to the house my own chalice, which is of a good size.

It may possibly be useful if at this point

I give a few hints with regard to the baptism of adults by immersion, as gathered from my own experience. I would recommend that the sacrament be administered in the vestry—well warmed if it be the winter season. Or, if the vestry be too small, let a portion of the church be curtained off. In our Norfolk churches the room under the tower is quite suitable. Let an ordinary iron bath be introduced, and for seemliness let it be covered over with a large sheet which overlaps the bath on to the floor. Let the bath be one-third filled with tepid water, and convenient steps be placed so that the catechumen can step into the bath without awkwardness. The catechumen, if a female, should be clad in a nice white dress; if a male, in some seemly undergarments. At the proper point in the service, the minister should take the catechumen by the right hand and assist him (or her) into the water, where he sits down. And at the actual baptism the priest, standing by the bath, presses him (or her) by the

shoulders back under the water at the three-fold sacred Name, and duly performs the sacred obsignation, and assists him (or her) out of the bath. The clergy and witnesses then leave the neophyte (or neophytes) and repair to the church, where prayers are said and hymns are sung until the neophyte rejoins them. Then the priest, standing at the chancel steps, with the newly-born and the witnesses before him, concludes the service. When carefully performed, this administration of the sacrament is reverent and impressive.

As I think of the angler by the side of the rippling stream, throwing his fly across the eddies, or dropping his bait into the deep pools, patiently exercising his gentle art all day and drawing out the fish one by one, I am reminded of our duty to fish for individual souls. And this leads me to speak of our work in visiting our people in their own homes, a work than which nothing can be more important and more fruitful.

There are parish priests who will say that they have no gift for this kind of fishing. They prefer working in a wholesale way by large schemes and methods of a wide and general utility. Others, especially of the younger generation of clergy, will tell you that they work their parishes by means of guilds and unions and various associations. But it is obvious that machinery of this kind only influences those who have some knowledge of good things and a desire to do what is right and please God. Whereas, our work must be really a missionary work. We want to reclaim those who are going wrong, and to influence those who are careless about their souls, and who would never dream of going to a parochial guild or a prayer union. We must "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel the careless ones to come in," or, as we all heard at our Ordination, we must "seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad and for His children who are in the midst

of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

This cannot be done except by visiting the people in their own homes.

I much fear that this blessed and necessary work is sadly neglected by many of the clergy, especially by the younger men. And I much doubt whether matters are improving, and whether the Clergy visit as well as they did fifty years ago.

Some allege the impossibility of visiting all the people in their large and often very populous parishes, and make this an excuse for visiting none but the sick. But if they cannot visit all, that is no reason why they should not do the best they can, and visit as many as possible. And if there be, as there ought to be, a good band of district visitors who will save the time of the clergy by informing them where visits would be or would not be acceptable and useful, there are few parishes which could not be kept well in hand.

Other clergy there are—not a numerous

body, I trust—who denounce the drudgery of visiting. “It was not for that kind of work that they were ordained. They are priests. They have plenty of services in the church. And if their people want them, they know where to find them.”

Well, they are priests no doubt, by virtue of their Ordination. But they are certainly not pastors. And it would be well if they remembered the obligations of the priesthood as set before them when they were ordained. Does not the example of the Master show us that we must not be content with methods that deal with men in the mass, but must also give time and care to personal dealing with souls? Experience shows that there are many to be won by an individualising ministry who otherwise would be only superficially affected by the public ministrations of the Church.

Besides, shall we not ourselves lose somewhat, yea, much, if we do not come into contact with individual characters, and take

an interest in, and try to bring to salvation, individual souls? In going about continually among our people we learn many a lesson needful for our own spiritual life, and helpful for the performance of our ministerial work.

For example, we gather much material for preaching. We see the needs of souls, the relative importance or triviality of subjects that we might choose for our sermons, the truths and thoughts that are strengthening and comforting in the great tragedies of life, the hour of bitter, heartbreaking bereavement, and the solemn last hours of the departing soul.

One sometimes wonders, when listening to a sermon, "Can that man have ministered to bereaved hearts; can he have heard the sobbing confessions of sin, the piteous cries for mercy of poor soul-stricken sinners about to appear before the judgment seat of the righteous God?" What a solemn, sometimes terrible, thought it is, when we are ministering to a dying sinner, sadly un-

prepared, as it would seem, to die, "And this man has been under my ministry for years!" "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."

Assuredly, then, we must, like the Good Shepherd, minister not only to the flock, but to each member of the flock, and try to bring back the wandering sheep to the fold. St. Paul, that great lover of souls, taught the Ephesian Christians both "publicly and from house to house." "By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." How those last words, "with tears," exhibit his thirst for souls! To the Thessalonians he says (1, ii. 11): "Ye know we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children."

I am more than doubtful about one modern way of regarding house-to-house visitation. I mean that of being satisfied when a certain number of visits has been paid during the day. For it may well be that a desire has been felt to fill up the

wanted number, and quite possibly some of these visits have been pointless and fruitless.

I should much prefer this way of regarding the matter: to how many precious souls have I tried, humbly and faithfully, to say a word for my Master to-day?

Visits may be too perfunctory. We may think too much of having paid a visit somewhere. The visiting of God's minister should be inspired with the predominating notion of saving and edifying immortal souls. Having this end in view, it will be done in the spirit of prayer. God's blessing should be sought by the pastor in his home, before the work begins; and often as he raises his hand to knock at his parishioner's door, especially if he is looking forward to a difficult interview, he will send up an ejaculatory prayer for the help of the Holy Spirit.

No need to say to you, my brethren, that God's minister will always comport himself with scrupulous courtesy in every household,

not entering the humblest door unless invited, turning away with a polite expression if he find the inmates engaged in a meal, making no comment upon possibly defective household arrangements, remembering that he is present only by the permission of the householder.

He should remember also that wherever he goes he should go as a minister of Christ. So that he will be upon his guard not to allow his visit to degenerate into the merely friendly call of the kindly gentleman, though he will not infrequently perceive that his parishioners would wish to keep the conversation upon that level, and would rather avoid, if possible, religious topics.

But in many aspects of our work we need to remember that our object is not to win hearts, but to edify souls. No doubt that tact, which normally the Christian gentleman will always have, will sometimes tell us that the direct introduction of religious topics would be out of place, and

be unlikely to do good. But we should always desire and endeavour to leave behind us a word spoken for our Master. And I think that as a rule, with many exceptions, doubtless, which our tact will teach us, when we feel that the proposition would from circumstances be unacceptable, we should pray with the people whom we visit.

I feel sure that "into whatsoever house we enter" we should wish, if possible, to offer prayer.

Clergy who have never adopted the practice will probably be surprised to find how willingly and often gratefully their overtures will be received. Indeed, really godly people are often disappointed if nothing of a directly religious character is said or done by the clergyman during his visit, and form a low opinion, perhaps quite unwarranted, of his spirituality.

I have known of an honest Yorkshire woman, when asked whether the clergyman had been to see her, replying in her dry

Yorkshire manner, "Oh yes, he's been here. But for aught he said, he might as well ha' stopped away."

On the other hand, not a few who cannot be called really godly people willingly acquiesce in the pastor's suggestion that he should offer a prayer. They feel that it is the proper thing for a minister of the gospel to do, and they entertain a more favourable opinion of his character from the proposition. Besides the blessedness and the efficacy of the promises given to believing prayer, consider, upon another and somewhat lower plane, how such prayer may touch the consciences and soften the hearts of those who partake in it.

Doubtless the pastor in his prayer, for of course he will pray without book, will introduce petitions appropriate to the circumstances of the family. He will pray for the children, the sickly infant, the young woman away from home in service, the boy upon the ocean, the delicate mother, the man out of work; for while he asks firstly for

spiritual blessings, inasmuch as the soul is of more value than the body, yet he will remember, and will so teach his people, that we are permitted and encouraged to ask for all the lawful requirements of the body.

And these things come home to the hearts of the people; and the mother's eyes are moist as she hears the prayer offered up for the loving protection of the Heavenly Father for her dear boy in "the peril of the sea." Can any ordained priest of the Church, whose heart is in his Master's work, think that such means of touching consciences and softening hearts, and so influencing souls, should be neglected?

Usually, though not always, the faithful pastor will in every visit endeavour to achieve some definite object which he will think out from the circumstances of the family: perhaps they are neglecting public worship altogether; there may be children unbaptized, young people unconfirmed, or, indeed, the elders themselves may be in that position. The children should be invited to

the Sunday School, the mother to the Mothers' Union, the elder daughter to the "Girls' Friendly." Provided they are really godly people, they should be invited to the Lord's Supper. And, indeed, in every household the effort should be made to lift up all the inmates to that which is higher and holier.

And the phraseology of that last sentence leads me to remark that this effort should be made on behalf of all people of all classes in the parish. You will remember St. Paul's words (Col. i. 28): "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." You will observe, of course, the reiterated "every man" (*πάντα ἄνθρωπον*).

There are some men, you know, who are praised for their special aptitudes. "He has such an influence over men," it is said, or, "He is so capable with the boys."

Yes! That is all very well. But the parish priest in the Church of England must be

an "all-round" man. That is the idea conveyed in the very term "parish priest," the priest of all the people in the parish. From time to time, therefore, the parish priest should take counsel with himself: "Is there any class in my parish that I have overlooked? Have I tried to do what I can for every one—*πάντα ἄνθρωπον*?"

Is it not necessary in this point of view to consider whether we have done what we can for the "gentlefolk" so-called, the affluent and educated? I have often heard good people of that class complain, "You clergy are very good amongst the poor. Why do you overlook us?" The gentlewoman will sometimes say—and it is a sad thing to hear: "No one ever spoke to me about my soul in my whole life." I daresay some of you would reply: "Why, if I were to speak to the gentlefolk in my parish about their personal religion, I should be told to mind my own business."

Well, even if so, God's minister would receive such words with meekness, though

he might reply that it is his business to try humbly to do his Master's work. Anyway, he will have the happy consciousness that he has tried to do his duty to God and the souls of his people. And what is that not worth!

And, moreover, he will find upon the whole that his poor efforts have been blessed. You will invariably find that those of our brethren who have faithfully endeavoured to do their duty in spiritual things to their affluent parishioners will tell you that though, possibly, they may have received one or two rebuffs, yet they have been amply recompensed, and thank God who gave them courage and grace to do their poor best. In this, and other like matters, we must seek from God's Holy Spirit courage, meekness, and tact.

This leads me to point out that there is another class of people which is apt to be overlooked, the class of domestic servants, especially in large houses.

I would suggest to you that, when call-

ing at such houses, you should ask the permission of the mistress to interview such of the servants as are members of the Church. You will thus make their personal acquaintance, and show your sympathy with them, and invite them, it may be, to Confirmation, and pray with them.

I may also remark that it is useful to ask the affluent people of your parish if they take an interest in their servants' performance of their religious duties, and make it easy for them to attend the services of the Church. For indeed all do not remember that, especially with regard to the younger servants, the mistress is in the place of a mother.

I am amazed on every ground as I think of the numbers of parish priests who practically do not visit their people, and make various excuses for not doing so.

Their own loss is grievous. For nothing is more certain than that we ourselves learn many things, unless unhappily we consider ourselves to be beyond learning, from asso-

ciating with various classes of humanity. From each grade of society we may learn somewhat, and I may say especially that without an intimate association with poverty and suffering there must be something wanting in our character. Universal sympathy tends to check many of our failings and to develop qualities which will otherwise remain stunted.

Why, the true pastor, who is a genuine lover of humanity, would desire to be on intimate terms with his people of every class and degree if it were only for the sake of his own happiness. For he esteems it one of his privileges to have genuine friends, those whom he loves and who love him, in the cottage as well as in the villa or the mansion. He has heard the confidences of his people; he has prayed with them; he has tried to help them, and is gratefully conscious that they have often helped him. He has found as sterling characters and as loving hearts among the poor as among that class with which socially he is the most

related. He cherishes always happy recollections of them, and rejoices in the hope of resuming loving intercourse with them in the future world.

With regard to the blessed art of ministering in spiritual things to individual souls, we must ask the Divine Fisherman to teach us how to angle. His motive was love for the souls for which He was about to die.

The world took the superficial view, as it usually does, of His actions and said, "He doeth all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear and the blind to see." But He did this to bless their souls. The Divine Master had insight into souls, and dealt with them accordingly. He deals differently with them according to their needs; sometimes with forbearance, and tenderness; sometimes with apparent severity; but always in love.

See how He deals with Nicodemus. An ordinary teacher and reformer would have been anxious to win over so important an adherent to his party. Is there not an

analogous temptation to the clergyman—to be pleased if a family leave a neighbouring church to attend his own, to be sore and irritated if a family or individual leave his church and take sittings at another! But Jesus thought only of the good of Nicodemus's soul. The teacher of Israel needed to learn humility and implicit faith; and so the Saviour lays before him, almost abruptly, some of the greater mysteries of the kingdom of God for his acceptance.

See how He deals with the rich young man—only for the good of his soul. He must be taught the lesson which we all need,

“The dearest idol I have known, whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne, and worship only
Thee.”

Yet, while severe with those who needed it, how tender and compassionate He ever was to poor broken-hearted sinners, such as “the woman which was a sinner” and Zacchæus. “The bruised reed would He not break, and the smoking flax would He not

quench." In dealing with them, it is to be observed, He makes a perfect diagnosis of their spiritual diseases. He saw that the way to soften the heart of Zacchæus, surface-hardened by the general contempt, was to treat him with great and unwonted kindness. And the result was that the publican's heart was melted.

How much may we learn from this! There is a soft spot in every man's heart, if only we are able to discover it. I have known wild, reckless gold-miners touched in heart at last by a reference to their early home and the prayers and tears of a gentle, loving mother.

Now the pastor, in the "ministry of souls," has to be continually dealing with individual souls, sometimes, it may be, with the sick or the aged, sometimes with the robust and the young, sometimes, it may be, with the cultured and refined, sometimes with the simple, the dull, or the ignorant. The soul with which he is dealing may or may not be in a state of grace and

salvation. His object will be to help it to obtain precisely that which it needs.

He will require the right motive, which, no need to say, is the motive which actuated the Master, the ardent love of souls. He must aim at attaining that which his Master possessed without effort, insight into souls, and deal with them to the best of his ability according to the wisdom which God gives him in answer to his prayers.

In his method he will desire to imitate his Master, avoiding on the one hand over-softness, and on the other hand over-hardness. He must be sympathetic, yet faithful.

Have you ever observed how wonderful a type we have, in the behaviour of Joseph towards his brethren, of the manner in which our Saviour, the true Joseph, behaved towards poor sinners? How He hides Himself from them and "makes Himself strange to them," and speaks "roughly" to them. Jesus is not the one to heal slightly the hurt of the daughter of His people,

saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." He will make the soul realise its sin.

And he sometimes seems to be hard upon souls, while there is true love in His heart all the while.

Sometimes, by a kind of loving feigning, He draws forth the penitence and devotion of sinners. So to the woman of Canaan He speaks of "throwing the children's bread to the dogs." So to the poor woman with the "issue of blood," "Who touched me?" though He knew right well. To the disciples going to Emmaus He feigned ignorance. "What things?" He asks, to draw them out.

Joseph pretends not to know his brethren's language, and speaks to them through an interpreter, as Jesus often speaks to our souls through an interpreter, some providential dealing. Simeon, the besetting sin, must be bound, and Benjamin, the earthly idol, must be surrendered. Joseph does not leave his brethren alone. He desires

to make the iron malleable. One day he feasts them royally; next day he will, by the stratagem of the cup, bring them down to the depths of shame and fear. He would prick their consciences, bring them to conviction of sin, and thus soften their hearts. He yearns for them in his loving heart, and goes aside to weep. And thus his purpose was fulfilled. What valuable hints, as God's ministers having to deal with immortal souls, we may learn from all this!

We observe Joseph's object. To stir their consciences. How easy for us to "heal slightly the hurt of the daughter of God's people," to "cry Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Is not this precisely what the friends of sick or dying people often wish us to do?—simply to soothe, to speak words of comfort, to tell the sinner who has lived without God, and who perhaps manifests no sign of genuine repentance, that his troubles will soon be over, and that we hope ere long to meet him in heaven.

What a hideous mockery the soothing

talk round the bedside of the dying often is! We must be faithful, and refuse to daub the wall with untempered mortar.

Or, observe Joseph's self-control. He "refrains himself" in the presence of his brethren. How careful we must be to preserve our self-mastery in our interviews with our people. We must try to know "what manner of spirit we are of."

We may be inclined to hardness and severity of judgment. If so, we must think of the gentleness and tenderness of Jesus. More likely we are disposed to leniency and too easy a condonation of sin. We have a human sympathy with the poor sinner, and pity his distress. Very likely there is something in the very tale of sin that appeals to our feelings. We long to soothe. Perhaps the tale told may touch our heart. Possibly there may be a resemblance to some past sin of our own; we are inclined to envy the depths of penitence. We feel soft-hearted. Yes. But doubtless the priest should remember that he is not only a

sinful man, but also the minister and ambassador of the awfully Holy God, and should keep a check upon his human sympathies.

The result of every interview that we have with a sinner should be—not that the sinner thinks more lightly of his sin, but that he thinks with deeper shame and sorrow of his sin, yet more hopefully and gratefully of the abounding love of God through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour.

What a difficult and anxious and awfully responsible work is that of ours in ministering to the sick! To be faithful, yet wise and sympathetic, to arouse the dormant conscience, to cast the gospel light upon the darkened ignorant soul; to move to true repentance, and yet to avoid making the soul of the righteous sad; to bring the awakened sinner to peace; to uplift the faithful converted soul to resignation, confidence, and spiritual joy; and to do all this patiently, wisely, lovingly. Who is sufficient for these things?

Surely in the sick-chamber we need the Holy Spirit to hold us perpetually by the hand.

• Meditate, in this connection, upon our Lord's behaviour towards the woman of Samaria as affording us principles of conduct in dealing with individual souls, especially the apathetic, the spiritually dull, the ignorant.

See how in His love for the poor, benighted soul the Lord opens the conversation with her. He first propitiates her by an act of courtesy in asking of her a trifling favour, "Give Me to drink." She is surprised and pleased. How often we may propitiate people, and make a way for the ingress of a spiritual lesson, by little acts of courtesy. Just as, on the other hand, we may give ground for a prejudice against us and our message by an apparent want of kindly, courteous consideration.

I have known of a poor Yorkshirewoman's prejudice against her vicar by his supposed pride in standing and not sitting down in her

humble cottage: "I suppose it isn't a fit place for him to sit down in: mebbe he thought the chairs were dirty."

We should assuredly cultivate a friendly manner, especially with the poor. If once they get an idea that "the parson is so haughty," his influence is at an end. What a responsibility—to prejudice men and women against the Church and the Truth by personal peculiarities and failings!

(2) The Master tries to lift the thoughts of the dull woman above the earth, and to kindle in her soul an interest in spiritual things. "If any man drink of this water, he shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." He does not explain this saying, but leaves it for her to think over. Just as He had formerly acted towards Nicodemus.

(3) Having put her mind upon the alert, He proceeds to the all-important work of awakening her dormant conscience. "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou

now hast is not thy husband" [or "thy husband is not"]. She was a woman who had lived and who was living a sinful life. And this was known to Jesus, known to God. She is in the presence, then, of the Searcher of hearts.

(4) She dexterously turns the conversation, which is trenching upon dangerous ground, and asks a question, as if glad of the opportunity, concerning the rival claims of Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. How true to nature is this! How constantly do sick people, when we try to get home to their souls, endeavour to turn the conversation to some indifferent subject! This we must not fall in with. Jesus puts before her the awful spirituality of God. "God is a Spirit," All-pervading, All-knowing, penetrating to the inmost secrets of the heart, "and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Ah! my brethren, how do the earth-bound creatures to whom we minister need this moving truth. "All things are open unto

Him with whom we have to do." How often have we, like our Master, to combat formality and unreality even in the chamber of the dying! "Oh, sir, I have always been a strong Churchman." "I have attended Church all the days of my life." "I have brought up my children in a respectable way." Ah! But what about the poor man's own soul? Is he prepared to meet his God?

We must always try to get down beneath the external crust to the man's inmost heart, and cause him to see the relation in which he stands towards the All-holy God. What a solemn thought it is that in very many cases the parish priest is the last human being who has the opportunity of doing all that man can do to turn the sinner to salvation!

Then, lastly, in our Lord's ministry to the poor sinner comes that which all the rest leads up to, viz., the revelation of Himself as the promised Christ. "I that speak unto thee am He." We have here the various stages through which we

should try to lead those to whom we minister. The opening of the mind, clearing away false ideas, the arousing of the conscience, giving true ideas of God, His holiness, His spirituality, the strict requirements of His law, all leading up to faith in Jesus as the one Saviour from sin.

The visitation of the sick, always a work of great responsibility, often presents great and trying difficulties. Sometimes the parish priest, especially in town work, is only called in at the very last moment, or he may hear accidentally as he is going his round that a person is dying close at hand. For we know how slow many people are in letting the clergyman know that their friend is ill.

Some seem to have an idea that there is no need to invite him to come until their friend is *in extremis*. "The doctor has given him up, so we thought we had better send for the minister." They may have an idea, too, that this step should if possible be avoided, as it will frighten the

patient with the idea that his life is despaired of.

Some of you may remember how Shakespeare, with his wonderful knowledge of human nature, hits this off in Mrs. Quickly's account of the death of Falstaff: "'A cried out, God, God, God! three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God. I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet."

What a picture of the dying of a godless man! Well, so it happens that sometimes the parish priest, to his utter distress and perplexity, finds himself called in to minister to one who obviously has but a few hours to live, and who, as he may know, or may have reason to think, has up to the present time lived a vicious or an utterly worldly, irreligious life. What can God's poor minister do? In an hour or two the immortal soul will have passed out of the poor, perishing body, and the opportunity for penitence and turning to God will be gone.

The difficulty is indeed a terrible one. For one thing he must be faithful and not cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." That is just what the friends wish him to do. "Cannot you say something to comfort him, sir?" they ask. Their only idea is to comfort the poor, dying sinner. They think nothing about his immortal soul and the judgment of the Holy God. Perhaps they stoop over him, telling him, poor soul, that his troubles will soon be over, and "we shall all soon meet in heaven." And the pastor's heart is weighed down with unutterable anguish at the unreality of all this.

But what can he do? He cannot do better than follow the example of his Master, and try to arouse the dormant conscience and help the poor sinner to realise his sin, and the spirituality and awful holiness of God, the Searcher of hearts, before whose tribunal he is now about to appear, and to implore him to seek by fervent prayer the all-prevailing intercession of the blessed Saviour.

The pastor, too, will pray himself, with earnestness and fervour, prompted by his anxiety and ardent love for the precious immortal soul, for the Divine compassion of the Heavenly Father, and for the help and advocacy of the patient, loving Saviour. Indeed, sometimes the pastor will feel that he can do little for the poor soul but pray for it. "The commendatory prayer," which the pastor should know by heart, may sometimes be modified and made more impressive by the introduction, notably at the beginning, of a more penitential and imploring element.

In cases of prolonged sickness the pastor will do well to form in his mind a scheme of instruction, and go on from one subject to another, choosing beforehand the passages of Scripture, and earnestly pressing home the truth which he desires to enforce.

He will frame his prayers also in harmony with the same subject. For I assume that he will employ extempore prayer suitable to the circumstances of the case. Though it

is well to use also prayers from the "Visitation Office," and other parts of the Prayer-book which have been committed to memory.

It is better, especially when ministering to the simple and uninstructed, not to use a book. Perhaps the plan which is as good as any other is to use prayers from the Prayer-book at the beginning, and, after the reading from Holy Scripture and the address, extempore prayer applicable to the case.

If the patient is an instructed member of the Church, and there are Church people to repeat the responses, the full use of the "Visitation Office" is very edifying, and a hymn should be sung. If no one but the patient is present, the reading of a well-known hymn, such as "Rock of Ages," is very useful.

When the patient is very ill and feeble, it is better not to read a passage of Scripture, but, kneeling down, to say slowly and solemnly, with pauses between,

special sentences of Holy Scripture, such as verses from the 51st Psalm and the "comfortable words." There is a very good catena of such passages in Bishop W. How's "Pastor in Parochia." Great care must be taken not to weary the patient. I should say that in cases of extreme sickness the interview should not last longer than a quarter of an hour, if as much. Where the patient is neither in pain nor very weak, it may well be some minutes longer.

Some of the younger clergy are apt to think that the one chief aim and object of the parish priest in ministrations to the sick is to lead the patient to clinical Communion.

But care and thought should be employed in this matter. It is quite conceivable that the patient may not be in a proper state of heart to receive the Holy Sacrament. The pastor must employ his ministrations to bring about such a state of heart in the patient as may qualify him for the sacred rite, and will look anxiously for signs of a

truly penitent heart, a loving faith in the adorable Saviour, and earnest desire to do the will of God, either by action or by suffering. There should be no undue pressure, but a desire to bring about a glad response to the loving invitation.

The same observations will apply to confession. The clergyman who evades hearing the confession of the sin-stricken sinner, and allows him to remain troubled and oppressed under a sense of hidden sins, with no peace nor brightness of hope, whereas at a suggestion he would pour out his confidences and obtain relief, or who refuses to give to the poor penitent the strength, comfort, and hope afforded by the absolution of the Church, is neither loyal to the Church nor kind in his treatment of his erring brother.

But, on the other hand, there should be no urging of confession, no setting it forth as a bounden duty. The experienced parish priest has had not a few instances in which the teaching of confession as necessary or

the proper thing for every member of the Church has resulted in unreal or even sacrilegious confessions, to the deep injury of the soul.

Confession in the Church of England is evidently intended to be a response to a felt need. And the sick or dying person should understand that if he is not at peace with God, but his soul is so troubled with a sense of sin, perhaps of some particular sins, that he cannot rest in peace and hope and joy upon his Saviour, his pastor is willing, and more than willing, for the love of his soul, to hear his sad secrets and give him "ghostly counsel and advice," and if needful give him the blessed absolution in the name of the Lord.

The Church seems to say to the sinner, "Are you at peace with God, through His blessed Son? If so, thanks be to God. There is no necessity for any private confession; yet you may use it, if you believe it would be useful. But you must be at peace with God. It would be dreadful for you to depart this

life not at peace with Him. If you cannot unaided attain to peace, call the minister of the gospel to your aid. Open out your heart and your sore trouble to God in his presence, that he may minister to you the consolations of the gospel, and by God's blessing bring you to peace."

Great and reverent care should be taken in the administration of clinical Communion.

It is well to ask the district visitor, or some good Christian woman, to go beforehand to the house of the sick person to make preparation for the reverent celebration of the sacred rite. Perhaps a low chest of drawers, situated well in the sight of the patient lying in bed, may be cleared and covered with a white cloth. A sacred picture, as of the Crucifixion, may be placed above; the desire being to use such accessories as may tend to remind the sick person of the celebration of the Sacrament in the church. The time spent by the district visitor before the coming of the priest may be utilised by the reading of Holy Scripture. The clergy-

man will bring with him what he needs—his Communion plate and linen, and his robes, cassock, surplice, and stole.

Giving these hints for the sake of the younger clergy, I would advise them not to employ the tiny toy-like vessels sold by some of the jewellers to the young clergy. They do not appear sufficiently worthy, and the tiny cup is not sufficiently stable. My own chalice is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height and $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches across the top; the paten $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter. These fit into an oak case with a handle. The people of the house should be told not to allow any one to go upstairs while the sacred rite is going on, and the divine service should be conducted with the utmost quietude.

In cases of extreme sickness or pain, or if the hour of death is drawing near, it is lawful and sometimes desirable to shorten the service. But the Confession and Absolution, the Prayer of Humble Access, the Consecration Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and the Prayer of Oblation should always be said.

It is well so to arrange that when, last of all, the sick person is communicated, there should be but very little of the consecrated wine in the chalice. Sometimes it may be desirable, perhaps even necessary, to break some of the consecrated bread into the chalice, and thus communicate in the two species at the same time.

When the priest is about to leave the house, he should give directions that for some little time the patient should be left in perfect quietude. The rule requiring at least two communicants beside the patient should certainly be observed whenever feasible. But, no doubt, sometimes, from the necessity of the case, it has to be dispensed with.

It has been sometimes pleaded that the squalid sick-chamber is often an unsuitable place for the celebration of the Holy Sacrament, and this is taken as a reason, or an excuse, for making use of the reserved Sacrament. Yet surely, if the poor chamber is too squalid a place for the consecration,

it is equally so for the bringing into it the Sacrament of the precious Body and Blood. But, I confess, the objection is one with which I am unable to feel any sympathy.

I have celebrated in as noisome chambers as can well be conceived; and instead of feeling this to be in any way derogatory to the Holy Sacrament, I have rather felt that the august Presence transformed the surroundings and filled the miserable apartment with a heavenly glory that uplifted one's heart with a sense of the Divine love. Never in the course of my long ministry have I perceived any necessity for the reservation of the Sacrament. And I feel that if by God's good mercy I am permitted on my death-bed to receive the precious Body and Blood of my Saviour, I should feel robbed of a portion of my heritage were they brought to me pre-consecrated and I were denied the privilege and comfort of adoring the love of my Lord in the consecration.

It is beyond doubt the mind of the Church of England that the consecration should

take place in the sick person's chamber. In one or two cases, because of special circumstances, I have permitted clergy, of whose loyalty I was assured, to take at the conclusion of the Office the consecrated elements from the Altar straight to the house of a sick person.

There is, I much fear, reason to think that the parish priest, God's ordained minister, is being gradually ousted from the sick-chamber. There are probably tens of thousands of persons who die every year in our land without the ministrations of any one in holy orders.

What is the reason of this? In some degree, I suspect, a growing disbelief of any special efficacy in the prayer of God's minister. Hence the friends do not "send for the elders of the Church"; and they wish to avoid anything that will agitate or alarm the invalid. And this indifference to the ministrations of the parish priest is probably heightened by the fact that commonly there is nothing special,

nothing of a sacerdotal character, in his ministrations, nothing but what could equally well be said or done by a pious layman.

This has caused not a few earnest clergymen to desire the revival of the practice of anointing as mentioned by St. James (James v. 14). And, indeed, the rite has been increasingly employed amongst us, and that by clergy of different schools of thought. And some remarkable instances of apparent blessing have been brought under my own notice.

On behalf of the practice it is urged that it is nowhere prohibited by the Church, and the words of St. James are plain. This is true, and it cannot be maintained that literal obedience to the direction of St. James is inconsistent with loyalty to the Church of which we are the ordained ministers.

Yet the Church has nowhere given any direction concerning the unction, probably because the curious history of the rite (see my little work on Confirmation and the

Uction of the Sick) gives no satisfactory account of its continuous use; whilst in times and countries where it was practised there were strange varieties of the usages connected with it.

I do not propose to enter further into this interesting subject, but I should like to draw your attention to a point which is frequently overlooked, that although no doubt St. James wrote his epistle (whatever its date) at some time in the period which is covered by the Acts of the Apostles, yet there is no mention in that book of any anointing of the sick. Sick persons were healed, but the outward form which was employed was that enjoined by the Saviour Himself, viz., the laying on of hands (Mark xvi. 18. See Acts v. 12; ix. 17; xiv. 3; xxviii. 8).

St. Paul apparently knew nothing of the direction given by St. James, nor, as far as we know, any other of the apostles. Quite probably it was not known outside the Church of Jerusalem. Surely it would

seem that of the two outward and visible signs, anointing with oil or laying on of hands, if either be employed, it should be the one which has the sanction of the Divine Master. And, indeed, if used and received in simple faith in the Lord's love and promise, we may be sure that it would be accepted and obtain a blessing.

The essential matter is that the pastor should recognise the supreme importance of this ministry to the sick and dying, and the solemn responsibility that lies upon him.

It is one of the great mysteries of life that each one of us has the opportunity of influencing another for good or evil, and thus promoting or hindering his or her salvation. How striking when realised in its fulness is the word of Holy Scripture, "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins"! How unspeakably blessed, then, to be the means of "saving a soul from death"! But what if, having the opportunity, we neglect

“to convert a sinner from the error of his way”? The same inspired writer would reply, “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

It is a solemn thought, as I have before remarked, that the parish priest is the last human being to whom is given the opportunity of moving the sinful soul of the dying to repentance and pardon. And what if by culpable neglect he does not use his opportunity? Many a priest of the Church has been struck with bitter remorse that through some carelessness or forgetfulness he has omitted a visit, or paid it only too late, and that the dying has passed away without the last solemn warning and prayer. In his sorrow he has desired to atone for his remissness by fervent intercessions for the soul of the departed.

Assuredly in his morning devotions the pastor should pray that the Holy Spirit of God may be with him, as in all his ministrations, so also in ministrations to the sick and dying, and that the All-merciful may make

use of him for the awakening of slumbering consciences, for the strengthening and consolation of God's believing people, for the reclamation of the fallen, the confirming of the doubtful and the fearful, for the bringing of all nearer to God in Christ.

You will find it a helpful thought to consider that the Master will behold and have regard to all that you do in His name. You remember how we are told that He sent forth His disciples two and two "into the cities whither He Himself would go." They knew, therefore, in their preaching and their labours, that Jesus Himself would shortly be following upon their footsteps, and would inevitably perceive what work they had done and how they had done it.

Surely this would be a helpful thought to them, and so to you. Would it not help you, when you are sitting in the cottage, conversing with the inmates, to reflect "The Master will be coming, and will know what I have been doing"? Or, as you mount the narrow, creaking stairs and minister to

the sick and dying, perhaps disposed to dislike your work and to do it in a merely perfunctory manner, as what has to be done, a work that you cannot evade, will not the same thought recall you to your solemn duty? "The Master, the Lord of love and the Lord of souls, has sent me on to prepare His way. He will soon be here Himself!" Surely this thought will be a help.

And will it not be a blessed thing if those to whom you minister are led by your words and actions to recognise you as a forerunner of the Lord, one sent on before to prepare His way, "by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just," so that they say of your ministrations, so manifestly calculated to lead men to God in Christ, "Is not the sound of his Master's feet behind him?"

May the Divine Spirit so fill our hearts with true and fervent love for our blessed Saviour that He may deem us not unworthy to be used by Him for the fulfilment of the object which brought Him into the world,

the salvation of the souls whom He loves, and thus may we, and those to whom we minister, be found an acceptable people in His sight when at His second Advent He comes in majesty to judge the world.

THE PASTOR IN SOCIETY

IV

THE PASTOR IN SOCIETY

WE have considered the pastor in his public ministrations. We have considered him in his private ministrations. Let us consider him now in his intercourse with the world—“μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενι διδόντες προσκόπην.” It is a difficult question for the priest, who above all men should strive to keep himself “unspotted from the world,” whether, or to what extent, and under what limitations, he should enter into society and take part in the amusements of the world.

It is sometimes bluntly replied to this query, “Christianity is social, not ascetic. The founder of Christianity came eating and

drinking. His first miracle was wrought at a marriage feast."

But the question is not so easily disposed of. This, indeed, shows that there is nothing *per se* wrong in taking a part—we will not at present say what part—in these scenes of social life. There was certainly nothing wrong for Him. He, the Immaculate One, could get no harm, and did do good. When He touched the leper, He was not contaminated; but the leper was cleansed. If He sat at the festive board, this was not for His own pleasure, but as a witness for God and to carry out His Father's commission. He manifested His glory and showed Himself to be sent from the Father. He transformed the supper-room into a church, and blessed the soul of the poor sinful woman, and preached a converting sermon to Simon.

If we can go into the gaieties of the world, or anywhere else in the same spirit and be a witness for God, and do aught to carry on our great work for saving souls, then we are undoubtedly in our right place, and

cadit quæstio. The Master teaches us that to be present at scenes of social festivity is not unlawful, and therefore we are free. But other questions remain for consideration. Is it our duty, as some would tell us, to "go into society," as the phrase is? shall we promote the great cause that we have in hand by doing so, and shall we be withdrawing in a cowardly spirit from a sphere of usefulness if we hold aloof? Surely, as, since the Word of God has given no directions upon this point, we are free; so, since the Word of God is silent, there is no ground for asserting that we are doing wrong in abstaining from scenes of social amusement.

We are free either way. Certain principles are laid down for us in the Word of God: "Whatsoever we do, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." We may go lawfully, and do good, to any place whither we can go with the Lord Jesus, and holding on by His hand. Our life should be sanctified as a whole and penetrated in all its details with the Holy Spirit of God. "We must

not give any offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." We must not put a stumbling-block in our brother's way, nor suffer our "good to be evil spoken of."

But these and other such principles being established, we are left in the carrying of them into practice to the decision of our rightly-informed conscience. Whence it follows that we must not judge one another upon this point.

But we may profitably put to ourselves one or two questions which may help to guide us to a decision. (1) "Is it safe for *me* to go into society? With regard to the love for souls, surely my own is the most precious. If I am satisfied that I get no harm from going into society, do I find that in any way it aids my spiritual progress? Do I learn anything of value which I could not learn in any other way? Does it help me to combat any of my besetting sins, or does it foster such sinful dispositions as vanity, self-esteem, love of flattery, worldliness of spirit? Does it distract my attention and

mar my peace, like reading an exciting novel?

(2) "Again, do I in actuality effect anything for my Master in the gay scenes of society?"

"Some say that the clergy act as a check upon anything undesirable; but in fact do they? Do I? There are, I know, clergymen who go to the social gathering, to the dinner-party, or the evening party, with a prayer upon their lips, who, without marring the innocent enjoyment of others, can maintain to the full their Christian character, and, by speaking a word in season without affectation or cant, will have reason to hope that they may have been of use to their fellow-men. Happy souls! Such men will go not only lawfully, but meritoriously, into the gay scenes of social life. They are as truly in their proper place there as in their study or their pulpit.

"But am I one of them? What is my experience? Have I not in the past year often come away from festive scenes with the distressing thought, 'Again have I failed,

weak, sinful man that I am'? And, though I have a good hope that I might be preserved from palpable sin, yet have I not ground for apprehension lest in society life I might, because of my temperament and the temptations to which it subjects me, compromise my Christian character, possibly not to others, yet to myself and to God, by giving way to the thoughtless tendencies of the hour?

"Then, too, I am not only a Christian, but a Christian minister. And people know that and expect more of me, and any little thoughtless slip in the merriment of conversation will be noted, and perhaps inflict an injury upon those that hear me, and upon the cause of the Master whom I represent. 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.'"

"But our people like us to go to their parties." Yes, some of them undoubtedly do. But why? Is it for any good that we do them, or only because we are pleasant gentlemen? So the layman will sometimes say, "I like to have as my clergyman one

whom I can ask to my house." Upon the whole, what is the impression that we have gained with regard to the effect that the clergy have had upon society? Have they done good or not? Have they by their secularity, by their falling in with the prevailing tone, put a stumbling-block in the way of any, either the gentlefolk or the servants?

Of course, if so, this proves nothing except the duty of faithfulness and great watchfulness. That excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the world is harmful to the spiritual life of the priest himself, and also injures his work as giving an impression of worldliness, there can be no doubt. On the other hand it will be said that the New Testament gives no encouragement to asceticism, and that it is out of harmony with the position and work of English clergymen. Be it so. But look at the matter all round.

With regard to asceticism. Fasting is set before us in the Word of God as helpful to us in our walk with God. Now, do we fast?

Perhaps we do in a certain sense, but not as the people in the Bible fasted. We abstain from pleasant food, perhaps, during Lent, and from meat on Fridays. Well, I do not deny that this is useful. It helps to keep us in mind of the solemn seasons, and the day of our dear Lord's death.

But it is surely not fasting in the strict sense of the word. We do not go without food for the whole day, or so abstain as to give ourselves pain. "No," you say, "it would not be right. In our climate it would injure our health, and we, unlike the Orientals, have heavy work to do. And we should not be able, if we fasted like them, to do it." Quite so; I do not deny it. And we do not believe that our Divine Lord would desire us to injure our health, and so impair our usefulness and power of working for Him.

Then, again, the English clergy are mostly family men. And the family life is hardly compatible with the ascetic life. Quite so; but is there therefore to be no element of mortification and self-denial in the life of a

clergyman? St. Paul represents himself as being "crucified to the world." Are we to give way to the pleasures of the world, and live the ordinary life of those who live in the enjoyment of the world? Are we to go freely into society just like other people, to our concerts and dinner-parties, and so forth, and possibly spend a good deal of our time in pleasant out-of-door exercise and amusements—in bicycling and lawn tennis, croquet and golf?

I do not, of course, mean that there is anything *per se* wrong in any of these amusements, yet this I do know, that some, a few, of the clergy in this diocese are keenly criticised for the time which they spend upon the golf-links, and thereby lose their spiritual influence over some of their parishioners. If we enjoy to the full all these things; if we quote the example of our Lord as coming "eating and drinking," and forget to quote Him as fasting forty days, and often spending the whole night in prayer; if we encourage ourselves in taking a full share in

the pleasures and amusements of society, and without, it may be, doing anything that is positively wrong, fall readily into an easy, self-indulgent, undisciplined, unmortified life, surely we cannot but then face this question, "How is all this to be distinguished from that merely worldly life to which we are so often making allusions in our sermons?" What then becomes of our Ordination vow, that we will give ourselves to prayer and study, "laying aside the study of the world and the flesh" (Ordination of Priests).

Surely, if we do not lead ascetic lives, our lives are not to be devoid of every element of self-denial and mortification of the flesh and the world. We can lead simple, retired, unworldly lives, abstaining from all such pleasures as either exercise any deleterious effect—even the slightest—upon ourselves, or expose us to any charge, though exaggerated, of worldliness or pleasure-loving. We can lead simple lives of study and prayer and work. "Be not conformed to this world."

Another consideration helps to guide us also in this matter—the value of time.

Many of us probably feel that we have no time to go much into evening society, even if we had the inclination. We are so much taken up with pastoral engagements, which is indeed far happier. How, moreover, could we find time for reading, and such studies as we are pledged to by our Ordination, if we were to give up our evenings, except very rarely, to amusements?

Another thought that comes across us in this connection is the necessity of especial care on the part of the priest with regard to his demeanour towards those of the other sex.

The popularity of the clergy with ladies is a not infrequent subject for raillery, perhaps for sarcasm, among the laity. If this indeed be so, it is in truth a sign of woman's goodness. Drawn in her gentle, piously disposed nature to religion, she may, perhaps, idealise those who appear to be brought so near to God, and from whom alone she hears of

holy and heavenly things, and be drawn to them in veneration because they minister in holy things and speak to her of goodness and truth. This idealisation probably fills us with shame. Anyway, it teaches us much.

It teaches us how circumspect we should be in our demeanour. St. Paul tells St. Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 8) that the deacons should be grave (*σεμνὸς*), not laying themselves open to reproach; it is sad, indeed, to think of any priest of the Church of God laying himself open to the condemnatory reproach of being "a clerical flirt." It warns those of us who are older of the danger of allowing ourselves to be flattered by a little coterie of admirers. It warns all of us to do nothing in word or deed which would destroy or impair in our sisters in Christ their veneration for the sacred office of the priest.

An important factor in the subject just touched upon, and indeed in all the subjects that have come under our view, is the fact that, as a rule, the English clergy are

married men. The fact is in many ways a great help to us in our work. It gives us a vast field of experience in the sphere of the intellect and of the heart which otherwise we could not have. It helps, or ought to help us much in our sermons. How can the celibate preach upon the manifold duties and difficulties of family life? It gives us an insight into the thoughts and feelings and temptations of women. It obviates in great degree any necessity for society life.

There can be no great need for the man to seek relaxation in social life who possesses it in domestic life. Moreover, because of the much wider range of anxiety and sorrow which we family men experience, we ought to be able to have a wider and deeper sympathy with mourners than can well be possessed by celibates. As we comfort them we can put before them the considerations that have consoled us; and they, too, listen to us readily, for they know that we understand them. Having ourselves gone through

the vale of Baca, we can use the waters for a well to refresh and reinvigorate the souls of God's people.

Altogether, the married priest who is happy in his married life has, I believe; greater opportunities and a wider sphere of usefulness.

Yet the married priest has his peculiar difficulties and trials. No doubt he has more anxieties, though those anxieties may be blessed to him. He has a strong duty to the members of his family, and may allow himself to be absorbed by family duties. He may be afraid of infectious cases because of his family. He may allow his mind to be taken up with cares, or ambitious thoughts concerning his children. If his children are sick or delicate, he may be so taken up with concern about them as to neglect or forget the claims of his own parishioners—as Jonah, the minister of God, allowed his concern for the gourd, because its decay affected him, to put out of sight his consideration for Nineveh, that great city, and

its threatened destruction. An apple held before the eye obscures one's view of a mountain.

Surely we priests are wrong unless by the grace of God we can so manage that our family life is not a hindrance to our priestly life. The pastor should bear it in mind that the nature of the home and the home life will have an effect not only upon himself and his dear ones, but also in some degree, and in many instances, upon his external ministry.

The clergy, especially, of course, in the rural districts, live in glass houses. The broad features of the household are well known in the village—whether it be well regulated and orderly, simple and unostentatious, or ill-regulated, extravagant, thriftless, and slovenly; whether it be the home of divergent interests, tempers, recriminations, cross-purposes, or of charity, harmony, and kindly considerations; whether self-seeking or love is the rule of the house. The characters of the pastor himself, of his

wife, and of his children are known and recognised. If the pastor be an Eli, and his sons like Eli's sons, this cannot be hid.

How many a clergyman is filled with grief at the thought that a member of his own family does open discredit to his ministry, and reverts in his mind with sadness to the words of Holy Writ, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?"

Every household has its predominating principle, what we may call the spirit of the household. It may be the spirit of pride and ostentation, or of discontent, as in the case of those who are always longing to be transferred to some other sphere, the master thinking himself unappreciated, the mistress being dissatisfied with her surroundings. It may be the spirit of worldliness and pleasure-loving, or of time-wasting and vacuity. Or it may be the spirit of modesty, of harmony and sense of duty. The pastor should do all in his power by the grace of God to

make the spirit of his house the spirit of duty, love, and peace.

In this point of view it is most desirable that the domestic servants should be in harmony with the rest of the household.

While no pressure should be put upon consciences, it is well that they should all be united in the communion of the Church. Otherwise the unity of the family life is marred, and the perfect sympathy of the family prayers. The pastor will, of course, have a care for the spiritual welfare of the servants. For he regards himself as being *in loco parentis*, and will do all that he can to help them in spiritual things, inviting them to be confirmed, and, with the assent of their mistress, making due provision for their participation of the Holy Sacrament. He will so demean himself that all his servants will regard him with respect as their true friend.

The pastor will by no means forget the important part which demeanour plays, as in the manner in which all men are re-

garded, so also in the way in which the minister of religion is regarded by those to whom he ministers.

It seems to us, does it not, most regrettable that manner should have such excessive weight as it has in the estimation in which men hold their fellow-men. You may have a parish priest, clever, learned, assiduous in his duties, blameless in his life, and yet, speaking humanly, not successful, personally not cared for by his parishioners.

And why not? The man is a perfect Christian gentleman—nay, more, he is a saint, as all know who know him well, and probably his parishioners think so too. Why, then, does he not succeed? Because he is shy, reserved, and somewhat cold in manner. And a man far inferior to him will apparently succeed much better and fill his church. Why? Because he is frank, genial, and hearty in his manner. Manner weighs with all, but more especially with the working classes, who, indeed, by it in great degree form their estimate of men

—until at least they get to know them intimately.

Many, many years ago, when I was quite a lad, I remember hearing the estimate which the labourers in a Warwickshire village formed of my lord at the Hall and his agent. When the agent drove through the village and the men touched their hats to him, he merely gave a nod or a wave of his hand. But when the Earl drove by and the men saluted him, he took off his hat. And the villagers estimated the two men accordingly. That lesson I have never forgotten.

Working people, the East Anglians as much as any others, are very quick to notice the difference between those who “give themselves airs” and those who do not. This assumption through pride, this “giving themselves airs,” is foolish and contemptible in every one. But it is worse in the minister of Jesus Christ. Our Lord condemns it again and again, as in His allusion to those who take the chief places

at feasts and love greetings in the market-places and to be called "Rabbi, Rabbi."

It is true, of course, that in this and other matters motives may be wrongly attributed, and that which is put down to pride may be, and often is, forgetfulness or absence of mind. Some men are frank and genial and pleasant naturally, as a part of their inherited disposition. To them this is no credit. But in this, as in other matters, what one has inherited another may acquire by conscientious effort.

And, surely, if demeanour weighs (as it does) so much with our parishioners—especially certain classes—the pastor should make it his object to overcome such faults of manner as may prejudice his people against him, and acquire such a demeanour as will dispose people to friendly feelings towards him. But this, not for himself or for his own "popularity," but because he desires to get rid of hindrances and obtain an ingress for the teaching of the gospel.

St. Paul knew how to propitiate his hearers by courteous and agreeable demeanour in order that he might get a hearing for the gospel of salvation. Remember his polite words to Agrippa and to the Athenians on Mars Hill. And similarly we shall be blameworthy if by our discourteous or repellent manner, by our bad temper, or any other personal fault, we prejudice our people against our ministry; while, on the other hand, we should desire and endeavour by recollectedness, by self-control, by consideration for others, by search for Divine grace, to acquire such a demeanour as will dispose men to listen to the message that we bring.

The faulty demeanour, hindering the work of the Church, which, whether rightly or wrongly, is most commonly ascribed to the clergy—and I must add to their families—is, I think, as I have already hinted, that of pride.

This, as you are aware, has in the past ages been commonly attributed to the

clergy. "Proud priest" was a term often employed in the Middle Ages. The reason of this—so far as it is true—is, I suppose, to be found in the fact that the clergy in the past time had exclusively, and in modern days have predominantly, the possession of one branch of knowledge, viz., the divine science of theology. Theology has been generally reckoned the sphere of the ordained priest.

Yet how strange and grievous it seems that men should be led away to false, miserable pride by the science which teaches us to know God, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, who dwells in the high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit."

The true pastor feels, on the other hand, that there is nothing so false, nothing so paltry, nothing so alien from the spirit of the Gospel as pride.

He is indeed grateful to God's providence that he has been placed in so happy a position. His ministry is his joy. Thankful

that his work is not with things but with living souls, he loves those to whom he ministers. He loves every man in his parish because he is a man; every woman because she is a sister in Christ. Thankful that to him, in his spiritual capacity, all are equal, all redeemed souls, all brothers and sisters in Christ, as such he ministers to them all. He knows no distinctions, except that he has somewhat more sympathy with the poor and suffering, because they need his sympathy more. He looks at them all in the light that shines from the face of Jesus Christ, and so regarding them prays and works for their salvation and growth in holiness.

How can he be proud as he repeats the words, "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief"? As he thinks of the exalted nature of the priesthood, and how he has been called to minister before God on behalf of his brethren, and to minister

to men as God's ambassador, he sighs, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

He is thankful for the privileged position which he holds, in which he is brought into near and dear relations with people of all classes, whom he loves wholly irrespective of class, and who, he feels, love him. He would change his position for none other upon earth, though he knows himself to be utterly unworthy of it. It is his secret joy, that which he holds nearest to his heart, that he is the servant of God, and "the servant of the servants of God."

Our demeanour as clergy of the national Church towards those of our parishioners who dissent from the Church is an important matter for our consideration.

With regard to united action with them, we should, in my judgment, act thankfully with them, if they will allow us to do so, in all matters in which we are agreed, and in which our principles as members of the Church are not affected; such as all purely moral matters, all matters which appeal to

our humanity, and which affect us all as members of the brotherhood of man—as, for example, the Congo question—matters municipal, and, if you please, you may add political, though I am by no means an advocate for the active participation of the clergy in questions of party politics.

But I have never seen my way to unite with those, who dissent from the Church, in religious and spiritual matters. We recognise thankfully the great work that has been done by them for the cause of the gospel—as, for example, in their great and much prospered work among the heathen; we thank God for the measure of blessing which God's Holy Spirit has given to their zealous labours; we rejoice for the saintly lives of many of their members; but it does not follow that united action with them would be wise or practicable.

Some of the separated bodies we believe to be in great and grievous error with regard to fundamental doctrines of the faith. Yet it would be practically impos-

sible to discriminate, consenting to act with some and declining to act with others. This would certainly not tend to peace. Then, by such a course of action, the members of our own communion would be grievously perplexed.

It would be commonly urged, as indeed I have heard it said, "Why do you clergy from time to time preach so earnestly upon the distinctive doctrines of the Church—as, *e.g.*, the Sacraments—and yet act with those who reject those doctrines as though there were no difference between you? Either there are really important, perhaps essential, differences between the Church and the various nonconforming bodies, or there are not. If there are not, then the Church, with its hierarchy, its system, and elaborate, expensive organisation, is quite superfluous, and ought to be swept away. But if there are deep and important differences, as we gather from your teaching, then what sad unreality for all to act together as if it were not so."

For various reasons I believe it to be safer, and ultimately for the good of religion, that we should go our own way and employ our own methods, and sympathise with our fellow-Christians whose systems and methods are different from ours, and pray God to guide and bless them in their lives and works. Staunch adherence to Church principles is absolutely compatible with Christian love.

One of the most eminent of the bishops now upon the bench, when vicar of a large London parish, used frequently to meet, when on his way to daily matins, a Nonconformist minister also going to his work. The vicar used habitually to offer a silent prayer that the blessing of the Holy Spirit might be with the minister that day in his work for God. And years afterwards he found out that reciprocally when they met the minister used to pray that the blessing of God might be with the clergyman of the Church.

With regard to parochial ministrations,

especially in the rural districts, we know that though those who are opposed to the Church for political reasons are ready to make out that there is a sharp dividing line between Nonconformists and Churchmen, and that the former do not desire and would not avail themselves of the services of the parish clergyman, this is, in point of fact, by no means the case. Except in the case of some of the extreme sects, there is no rejection of the doctrines of the Church of England.

A large proportion, probably the greater number, of those who usually attend the Nonconformist chapel have no objection whatever to the Church — rather otherwise. They do not reject the doctrines of the Prayer-book. Probably they have no notion that the theology of the church is different from that of the chapel, but simply attend the chapel because they like its ways better, the simple, informal service, and the hearty, homely preaching. They frequently attend church, and habitually do

so if anything special is going on. They take part in all the social gatherings of the Church, and frequently contribute to Church purposes. In fact, they are almost as much Church people as chapel people.

Some of them, where the service is simple and the preaching simple and fervent, join the Church. And if in all churches the services were simple and hearty, and the preaching fervent and heart-searching, yet more would join the Church. In trouble these people are thankful for the sympathy of the parish clergyman, and in sickness they cordially welcome his ministrations. They bring their children to the clergyman to be baptized. They are married by the clergyman, and, of course, they expect their clergyman to officiate at their own or their dear ones' funerals.

In all this there is, as I hope you will agree with me, a great deal to be thankful for. It is a state of things which, though as Churchmen we may wish it were in some respects otherwise, we must readily

fall in with. You will, I am sure, help them as far as God may enable you. When they are sick, you will, as I know you do, befriend them, as far as you can, both in temporal and spiritual matters, without inquiring whether when in health, they attend church or chapel—possibly they attend both. You will minister to them assiduously when sick, just the same, just as conscientiously, as though they had been members of the Church, and will indeed be thankful if by the grace of God you are enabled to draw their souls nearer to the Saviour.

Yet, while we recognise and appreciate the goodness of those who have separated from the Church, we lament as Christians our divisions as being contrary to the Divine will; and as convinced and loyal Churchmen we would fain, if we could, bring back to the Church, and so vastly strengthen it, those who have left us. To this end we shall desire to remedy whatever faults there may be in us or our

organisation—as, for example, our sad lack of the sense of brotherhood—and also endeavour to commend our doctrines and our Church system.

But this will never be done by argument, still less by controversy. The objections which are made to the Church by those who dissent from her are not so much intellectual as practical. If you desire to bring them back to the Church, you must show them that they will gain spiritually by returning to the Church. Let them see that the Church is *par excellence* the spiritual body.

Let them see that the clergyman is indeed the spiritual man of the parish.

Let them hear the church bell ringing frequently for worship—not merely on Sundays.

Let them know that if they go to church at the time of Matins they will find him there, reading the Word of God and praying for his people.

Let them believe that what he preaches

he believes with all his heart and soul, and is striving by grace to act up to.

Let them learn that it is he in fact, and perhaps he is the only one, who visits the sick and dying and strives earnestly to win their souls for God.

Let them see that he visits diligently and in a sympathetic spirit the members of his flock, endeavouring to lift them up to that which is better and higher and holier.

Let them hear him pouring out his soul in extempore prayer and know that he delights in teaching the dear children himself in school, and zealously prepares the young people for Confirmation.

Let them perceive that he is leading a simple, unworldly, godly life. And if they perceive all this, and the fruits of this—that the Church people are the charitable and spiritual body, that souls are converted and built up in holiness, that the young people are indeed benefited and strengthened by their Confirmation, that the communicants of the Church are loving, sanctified

souls—I say, let them perceive all this and there can be no fear but that alienation from the Church would depart, and the Church would attract the respect and the allegiance of those who love holiness and the God of holiness.

I have just hinted that I am no believer (speaking generally) in controversy. It is usually barren, to say the least. If we wish to commend our religion, the best plan is not to argue about it, but to live our religion.

And in this connection I would recommend to you, dear brethren, to take no part in the correspondence, usually anonymous, which is frequently going on in the newspapers. A secular newspaper is not the place for the discussion of sacred subjects. This anonymous correspondence does, I believe, much harm by stimulating uncharitableness and causing amusement to the godless.

It is better, too, in my judgment, for one's own peace of mind and the cause of

peace, to take no notice of anonymous attacks upon oneself. Correct misstatements of facts, if you like, and the matter be of sufficient importance, but do nothing more. They usually proceed from malice, and malice will reply as well as initiate.

Sensitiveness to attack and eagerness in self-vindication are usually signs of a weak character.

I would advise you not to take part in merely party politics. You have a right to your opinion and to give effect to your opinion, like any other citizen, by your vote. But there are good and able men on both sides of the political world, and you and I were not ordained to teach men secular politics, but the gospel of Christ; and if the clergy openly take sides they alienate those of the opposite side, and indispose them to listen to their delivery of the message of salvation.

You will understand that these remarks only apply to party politics. When the interests of morality or religion or the

spiritual interests of Church people are intimately affected, as, *e.g.*, in the education controversy, which affects the religious principles of some millions of our own members, then not only is it lawful, but in my judgment our bounden duty, both to inform the people and also to put forward whatever influence we possess on behalf of what we conscientiously believe to be the cause of God and God's truth. The opponents of the Church put forth their utmost efforts on their side, and if we remain inert or apathetic, and allow the matter to go by default, we, as it seems to me, betray the cause of the truth.

The principle which I have just put forward as to the undesirability of our taking an active part in party politics will apply, I think, but with some modification, to the appeal which is now being made to us to take part in the industrial and economic questions which are agitating society.

This appeal I regard with grave doubt.

Are we competent to speak with any weight upon economic questions? I am afraid that if we were called upon to instruct the people in economic science a good many of us would only exhibit economic nescience. Are we really called upon to enter the arena where temporal questions of some difficulty are debated and take part in the controversy? We were not ordained for this purpose. In our Ordination no mention was made of such subjects.

We are bound, as Christian ministers, to denounce whatever is admitted on all sides to be unrighteous, all fraud, all injustice, all oppression. We are bound to press upon all men the duty of doing to others as they would others should do to them. But in many of these industrial and economic matters there is room for debate—at all events there is debate—as to what is allowable and what is not.

Surely we are not called upon to decide in such a matter. If we do, we take a side, for there are usually two sides in these

matters—the employers and the employees; and if we take one side we offend the other side, and so alienate them and indispose them to receive from us the message of the gospel. And it was for this very purpose, to preach the gospel and to labour for its acceptance by God's responsible immortal creatures, that we were ordained.

See what immense harm was done at the time of the elections twenty years ago by the fact that in general the clergy sided, or were believed to side, with the employers, and therefore, as the labourers were taught, against them. We lost for the time—I hope we are gradually regaining them—the great mass of the agricultural labourers.

It appears to me plain that it is a principle of the gospel that we should not so take part in temporal matters as to indispose men to listen to the message which we bring to them from God. Look at the example of the Divine Master. He indeed preached, as no one else ever did or could, the great moral truths of honesty, justice, and mercy. Yet

He ever studiously held aloof from all debated secular questions. When He was asked, "Lord, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," He plainly refused to intervene. Though it should seem that there was some wrongdealing in one brother or the other, and it might have been thought that the Lord would intervene to rectify the wrong, yet He significantly entirely refused to enter the secular sphere.

There were temporal matters, such as the relations between the various classes, between the rich and poor, which grievously required amendment. Yet He made no attempt to bring about any alteration in the laws, or took a step in the direction of reform. His method was different. It was to endeavour to make men good, and to leave goodness to work its way in the world.

Or, if you demur to take our Lord as an example in this matter, because of His unique nature and work upon earth—though I see no sufficient justification for taking up

such a position—consider the case of the apostles. They were confronted with social problems greater than ours, social injustices and iniquities, as, for example, the question of slavery. Yet they made no effort to effect an improvement in the laws, nor brought forward any sweeping measures of reform; but, preferring purely spiritual and moral methods, they made it their object to bring men under the influence of the Divine Spirit of their Master, knowing that, if they could succeed in that object, the social difficulties and injustices of the day would disappear. The ethics which they taught were contained in the one sentence, that “love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Is it, then, our wisdom and our duty to follow the principle acted upon by Christ and His apostles; or can the advocates of those who urge upon us a different policy prove to us that the circumstances are now so different that it is our duty to follow a line of conduct which our Lord and His apostles, obviously with intention, declined to follow?

The clergyman of the Church may lawfully take part in the promotion of any good cause, and engage in any secular work which commends itself to his judgment—and in doing this he may be useful to the whole community—provided he does not thus alienate any party, and so indispose them to receive from him the gospel of salvation, and provided also he does not do anything which derogates from his spiritual character. He is indeed a citizen, but he is pre-eminently, because of the call of God and the solemn obligations he has taken upon himself, a spiritual person bound to engage in spiritual work.

I would have him, therefore, in all his intercourse with the world to bear this in mind, and not to suffer others to forget it, that he is a spiritual person, an ordained priest of the Church. The principle set forth by St. Paul is valuable and urgent: "Give no offence, no, not in anything, that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of Christ."

Wherever, therefore, we may be, and in whatever company—in business circles, in the amenities of society, in the domestic scenes of home, as well as in our religious work—we should “approve ourselves as the ministers of Christ.” We are, as St. Paul tells us, His ambassadors. And ambassadors must not permit their august Master to be discredited by them or their doings.

It is pleasant, and often useful, for the parish priest to be liked, but it is far better that he should be respected. The parish priest should never so demean himself at any time, or in any place, as to cause any one to think, “I could not open out my heart to that man, nor seek from him spiritual help.” My idea would rather be this, that as he walks down the village street, or draws near to any of his parishioners, they should have a bright smile of welcome on their countenances, the smile of respect and love, and say within themselves, “Here comes religion.”

In short, the main thing is this, not that

men should regard us with liking, because of our amiable, inherited qualities and engaging manners; not that we should be popular, as pleasing the people; not that we should be admired or applauded, but that we should be esteemed as men of grace, of piety, and love, and honoured as “ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

I should not, perhaps, quite pass over, when touching upon the duties of the parish priest, the familiar question and answer of the Ordinal, “Will you reverently obey your Ordinary and other chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?” “I will do so, the Lord being my helper.”

There are those who will restrict the scope of their promise to obedience to the laws of the Church, of which the Ordinary (or Bishop) is the executive officer. But surely

in that case this question and answer might as well be omitted. If the priest must obey the law, or be punished if he disobey the law, why should he be called upon to promise to obey it? Whereas the appeal throughout all these questions, is to the conscience of the candidate for the priesthood. Will he promise to do his duty in matters in which there is no legal compulsion? So here assuredly the appeal is to the moral sense. Will he obey his bishop in matters which are not matters of legal compulsion?

It is not questioned that if the bishop issue a command which is plainly and admittedly contrary to the law of the Church, the priest must obey the law of the Church, by which, indeed, the bishop is bound as much as he. But there is, as all admit, a wide range of doubtful matters, concerning which the law of the Church is not clear, and also, perhaps, matters which admit a different decision according to the circumstances of the case.

Yet in these matters there should be some rule, some guidance, and the principle of the Church has ever been that the deciding authority is that of the bishop, and it is to the principle of moral obedience to that authority that the question of the Ordinal makes its appeal.

Obedience which cannot help itself has no moral value, whereas the appeal here is obviously, I say, to the moral sense, "Will you *reverently* obey your Ordinary, &c., following with a *glad mind* and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?"

But I pass that by to say a few words concerning the relation of incumbent and assistant curate.

It should be borne in mind by both that the "cure of souls," and therefore the responsibility, rests entirely with the former. He is, in the language of the Prayer-book, the curate. The other is his assistant in carrying out the spiritual work of the parish, and as such is licensed by the bishop.

In their relation to each other the watchword of the curate should be loyalty; of the incumbent, responsibility. The assistant curate will then be loyal to his superior, not only avoiding making a party against him, but not allowing himself to be in any way used by those who desire to get up a party. Though he may possibly think that he knows better than his elder, and conceivably may be right in so thinking, yet he will conscientiously and carefully avoid criticising him, or giving any ground for the assertion that he disagrees with the incumbent. He must be able, if in fact he does disagree with the views or action of his incumbent, to hold his peace.

It is most harmful to the peace and spiritual life of the parish should there evidently be disharmony between the two. If the curate find that he cannot work loyally with his superior, he should move elsewhere.

On the other hand the incumbent should remember, especially if the assistant curate

be quite a young man, that he has a large measure of responsibility for him. He may, indeed, be said to be *in loco parentis*.

In the formation of ministerial character and efficiency, very much depends upon the treatment which the young clergyman gets from his incumbent in the first years of his ministry. It is for the incumbent to see to it that his young colleague works well, visits the poor, the sick, and the whole, diligently and sympathetically, and passes a certain number of hours in the study of divinity.

He should also, in a loving spirit, help him in the discharge of his various duties, giving him the conclusions of his own parochial experience, in a friendly way criticising his sermons, endeavouring, in short, to train him for his life's work. If this, indeed, be not done, the mass of young clergy, who go, without any special preparation for the ministry, straight from the University to ministerial work—alas! that

it should be so!—go to parochial work practically untrained, and must work out methods for themselves; whereas they need, and if right-minded, long for, help and guidance.

It is a mistake for young men, when about to be ordained and looking out for a curacy, to take as their ruling consideration the inquiry, "Where is a man most needed?" That is a consideration which may well come afterwards. But the prior thought should be this: "I must first of all learn my trade. Where, and under whom, shall I best learn the pastoral science?"

Young men often make the mistake, as it appears to me, of turning their attention to what they can do rather than to what they are. At ordination time they will ask, "How can we get hold of the young men?"—a useful inquiry enough in its proper place. But I would rather that in the first place they should be thinking about their own sins and shortcomings, and communing with God and seeking His abounding grace for

their own sanctification. Our first desire must be to be made "vessels unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

With regard to the relation between incumbents and assistant curates, I may make the remark that, to my mind, we clergy, especially, I mean, we who are older in the ministry, are sometimes reticent when we should not be, and too shy or too timid to reprove with gentleness, or advise, our younger brethren in the ministry. There are those, indeed, who will resent this; but rebuffs we must always be prepared to meet in the course of our ministry, and they who are offended at the time sometimes afterwards appreciate the right intention and are benefited; and the right-minded, who have accepted the aspiration, "Let the righteous smite me friendly and reprove me," will be indeed grateful for the kindness which prompted what is far from being an easy or welcome duty.

THE PASTOR IN HIS INNER LIFE

V

THE PASTOR IN HIS INNER LIFE

IN this brief and imperfect sketch of the pastoral duties of the parish priest it will be well, before bringing it to a conclusion, to glance at one or two of the special difficulties and trials of his life.

For example, in a diocese like ours there is a great liability among the clergy to despondency. I was greatly struck upon my first coming into the diocese with the depression exhibited by not a few of the clergy, their complaints of the lack of progress in the Church, the alienation of the labourers, the lack of communicants among the labouring classes, the hostility to the Church, and their own isolation and loneliness. They appeared "out of heart." I fully believe

these matters have much improved since then. There is now much more intercommunication between the clergy, and therefore less isolation, this improvement being owing to various causes, among which we must reckon the friendly bicycle. Yet there are a few, I regret to learn, who cannot be drawn out of their shell; and very seldom, if ever, mix with the brethren at religious or friendly gatherings.

This is much to be regretted. For we need less of individualistic religion and less of isolated individualism in our work for God. The blessed truth of the communion of saints should teach us more zeal for the corporate life of the Church.

One antidote to this individualism among the clergy is to be found, or ought to be found, in clerical societies and devotional gatherings. A clerical society meeting, say, once a month, when a passage of the Greek Testament is discussed carefully and considered verse by verse, and, indeed, word by word, from different points of view, accord-

ing to the standpoint of the speaker, and a paper read and discussed on some practical or doctrinal topic in the afternoon, is a valuable stimulus to the study of Holy Scripture and of theology.

An admirable society of the kind in Liverpool, in which, I may remark in passing, we were nineteen years going through the Acts of the Apostles, was a very great spiritual and intellectual help to myself. I would that there were such a clerical society in every rural deanery in the diocese.

Devotional meetings, such as "quiet days," and, still more, three-day retreats, are very valuable. Nothing draws men nearer to each other so much as praying together. It is good indeed for men of somewhat different "views" and different temperaments to meet together on the basis of their common faith and common needs, to pass a day or two in quiet meditation, self-searching, supplication, and intercession, each for all and all for each.

The striking and blessed abatement of

party bitterness within the past years is owing, I am confident, to these devotional meetings, from which clergy, depressed, and perhaps too much occupied with their own difficulties, go away cheered and lightened in heart, strengthened by the sympathy of their brethren, to resume with better heart their round of sacred duties. It is difficult to know why there are not more of such devotional meetings, which can be conducted upon any plan which commends itself to any body of the clergy, and why more of our brethren do not take part in these opportunities of spiritual profit.

A movement has lately been gaining ground in the Church to promote the amalgamation of small benefices. And this in a great degree under the plea that it is desirable for the clergy, to improve their incomes, and to prevent deterioration in their characters, to give them more work. It is, I think, regrettable that quite young men, full of health and vigour, should settle down in villages with quite small popula-

tions, whereas there are other spheres in the Church which would more adequately call forth all their energies.

But we must regard the matter from another point of view. The shepherds exist for the sake of the sheep. What effect would the amalgamation upon a larger scale of small benefices have upon the spiritual interests of the people? It would, of course, mean a great diminution in every parish of the means of grace, and in one-half of the parishes so amalgamated there would cease to be a resident clergyman. Such a policy would be opposed and bitterly resented by the parishioners. And this is a matter for thankfulness. It would indeed speak ill for the spiritual condition of our people if they tamely acquiesced in the serious diminution of their spiritual privileges.

Consider for a moment what the result would be if in the village the early celebration were wholly or partially dropped—if instead of both Matins and Evensong, which have been held for centuries, the

people must be satisfied with one or other alternately; the Sunday School dropped because the clergyman and his family are engaged at the other village; the people obliged, if they wished to attend divine service twice on Sunday, to walk one or two miles in the darkness, wet, and cold, whereas the Nonconformist chapel is warm and lighted in their own village; the clergyman, if needed for a case of sickness, to be sent for to the other village. What the result of this would be we cannot doubt.

It is said, indeed, "The people must, if they wish for two services on the Sunday, go to the other church for one." "Must" is rather an awkward word to use in such a connection, and the usual reply of the average Englishman to "must" is "won't." Is it not really evident to those who are acquainted with human nature as exhibited in our rural districts, and the slender knowledge of Church principles possessed by the people, that, under such circumstances as I have just described, numbers of the religious

people, their church being shut, would frequent the Nonconformist chapel and be gradually alienated from the Church, while the lukewarm would become yet more indifferent to the ordinances of the Church?

Beyond doubt, in some cases, where the population of a village is tiny, and churches are perhaps very near to each other, amalgamation or temporary "dispensation" is desirable. But there is need of anxious thought and care; and I wish to place upon record my own conviction that amalgamation upon a large scale would be in the highest degree injurious to the Church in our rural districts.

But, to return to our more immediate subject, the trials of the country clergyman, do not some of the brethren find it difficult, and they would think undesirable, for them to go on plodding away in the same place, ministering to the same people, year after year? "This, they say, is a drawback to our Church. There ought to be a change

every few years. The people are tired of our sermons. We have influenced all those we are likely to influence. We think it high time for a change."

But we notice the same disposition in the prophets to complain of non-success. "Lord, who hath believed our report?" says Isaiah. Ezekiel, "Ah, Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?" Jeremiah is sorrowful, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears." They were lacking in faith.

Sometimes the English clergyman thinks he is not suited to his present position. He is not suited to the people. He has been more successful, and would be again, in the North—though my own conviction is that the clergyman who is "successful" in one part of England would be successful in any other—so he wishes to get away, and is continually trying to effect an exchange, or is applying for vacant livings. This is the destruction of all contentment and peace, and therefore of all useful work. The

priest who is continually aiming at preferment, or making efforts to get work elsewhere, is distracted and perturbed, has not his heart in the work, and in consequence his work falls to pieces and he himself is unhappy.

As to the question of non-success, the despondent cry, "Who will show us any good?" We must all of us bear it in mind that success is not within our power: effort is. We are not responsible for non-success. Success rests with God. But we are awfully responsible if we do not put forth our best efforts. Every one has his cross; and the priest can expect least of all to be without one. "*Evangelium Christi sincere prædicantibus nunquam deest crux,*" so says Erasmus.

The true remedy for this restlessness amongst us, this dissatisfaction with our surroundings, this longing for a move elsewhere, is faith—not that vague, feeble thing which in reality is nothing more than the absence of doubt, but that realisation of

God, that laying hold of God with a firm spiritual grasp, which is constantly spoken of in the New Testament as the "knowing God," not merely the knowing something about Him. To know God (*γνώσκειν τον Θεον*) is to know Him personally, to be in vital fellowship with Him, to fulfil that relation towards Him for which we were made. "Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." The true disciple knows the Holy Spirit: "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

It is useful for us to notice that St. Paul, when dwelling at Rome among heathen, and doubtless in some jeopardy, dwells much upon the necessity of a fuller knowledge (*ἐπιγνώσις*) of God. It is Bishop Lightfoot who remarks that in all his epistles from Rome this is the culmination of the Apostle's prayers for his converts, that they may advance in this *ἐπιγνώσις*, this experimental knowledge of God, and consequent identification of the will with the will of God.

If this apply, as St. Paul would teach us, to all believers in Christ, surely most of all to us, called of God, and ordained to the sacred evangelic priesthood. See what a remedy it would be for the depressing and weakening perplexities, complainings, and despondency that I have touched upon. The priest will believe that God, his loving Father, holds him by the hand, and always has held him by the hand. This faith will give him an implicit trust in His loving Providence, which will obviate many of these perplexities and doubts. He will say, "It is God, my Heavenly Father, without whose disposition not even a sparrow falls to the ground, who by His providential guiding has placed me here!" Perhaps he may be able happily to add, "Since I have been here He has graciously given me some tokens that His blessing has been with me. I will therefore take no initiative in leaving the post where God's Providence placed me, but here I remain until He opens out a

way before me and gives me some call to move elsewhere."

This resting upon God's loving Providence is the great remedy for our despondency and discontent and perplexities and bereavements. It is contentment; it is rest and peace. It is necessary for the proper performance of God's work. For sadness is weakness, the "joy of the Lord is strength." Remember the words of the hymn—

"O Lord, how happy should we be
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest
And feel at heart that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best."

Yet, my brethren, while we feel that faith in God and in His loving Providence would obviate the common failings to which I have alluded, we may lawfully seek a remedy for that which is undoubtedly a drawback to the lot of some of our country clergy, viz., the lack of sufficient work to occupy their energies.

Not that I would admit for a moment that insufficiency of work would be any excuse for deterioration of character. What would such men as Richard Hooker, George Herbert, and John Keble have said to such an unworthy theory? Yet it is undoubted that insufficiency of employment is a disadvantage, a drawback, and a temptation, to be dealt with like any other drawback and temptation.

If, then, the parish priest has only very light work which he is obliged to perform, can he not, as a faithful, loving, Christian man, undertake other work of his own accord to promote the cause of Christ? He can help his brethren, when he is not engaged in his own parish. He can act as a voluntary worker for one of our excellent Church societies. He can act as a deputation for the blessed missionary cause, and thus save the expense of a deputation sent from headquarters.

No doubt our people prefer to be addressed by one who has himself been

labouring in the mission field, provided he be an interesting speaker, which is not always the case. But the clergyman who has a heartfelt zeal for the missionary cause—this is essential—can read up the history of some particular mission and studying the reports and getting hold of details and telling incidents, can not merely hold the attention of the audience, but move them to take a keen interest in the blessed evangelising work of the gospel.

And this leads me to say that real earnest efforts on behalf of missions to the heathen form an indispensable part of parochial work. I do not propose to dwell upon the duty and privilege of zealously supporting the great missionary cause. For every believing Christian man knows that it is an essential part of the gospel of that blessed Saviour who lived and died to save the souls of men, and whose last command before in bodily presence He left this earth of ours was the command given to the Church to go forth and evangelise the nations. The cause of

missions is, in a word, the cause of Christ; and our zeal for the salvation of souls is the thermometer of our love for Christ. This, I am sure, dear brethren, you all believe and feel.

But what I do wish to point out to you is this, that organised work on behalf of foreign missions is helpful, nay, I believe indispensable for the spiritual well-being of your parishioners. The work upon which our Saviour lays such stress, and which was so dear to His own heart, cannot be neglected without spiritual loss.

Two of the chief evils which, as you know well, we have to combat in the work of the Church are the selfishness of individualism and the narrowness of parochialism. The former says, "If only I can get to heaven, that is all that I need care for." I read some time since, in a popular book of devotions translated from the French: "Our one object in religion is to save one's soul." Miserable, unworthy theory! Such is the religion of mere selfishness, whereas the

religion of the gospel is the religion of love. The centre of our holy religion is not self, but God.

The latter, parochialism, forgets that it is part of a diocese, and the diocese a part of the church—does not really believe in the “holy Catholic Church” and does not understand the meaning of “the communion of saints,” but thinks only of local needs and grudges every penny that goes out of the parish. We want to get rid of this spiritual selfishness and narrowness. We desire to beget in all hearts a love for souls and zeal for the corporate life of the Church. With our Master, love for souls was a passion, and He “loved the Church and gave Himself for it.”

Now, if we can by God’s blessing beget in our people a real living interest in the work of the gospel among the heathen, so that they desire fervently the salvation of souls, and pray fervently in their daily prayers for the salvation of souls, and hear with joy, as did the first Christians, of the

conversion of the heathen (Acts xv. 3), we are doing the best we can to lift them above the mundane atmosphere of selfishness into the purer heavenly light of love—love for the Lord Jesus and love for the precious souls for whom He died. Thus the zealous advocacy of the missionary cause is one powerful means to employ for a true conversion to God.

But the advocacy must not be merely perfunctory, but genuine and hearty. Not merely the one formal annual meeting in the schoolroom, languidly prepared for, sparsely attended—except by the school-children if there be a magic-lantern—spoken to by a chilled and disappointed deputation, and closed with an inward feeling of relief. Not merely this; but the pastor himself must be in his own heart deeply in earnest in the cause. Otherwise the work will be languid and the meeting spiritless. If zealous he will constantly bring the matter before his people in his sermons—not merely once in the year

when there is a collection for the Society. He will show that the missionary work is an essential part of the gospel and a matter for the fervent prayers of every disciple of Christ. He will have periodical meetings, perhaps every quarter. Sometimes he will invite a neighbouring brother to come and speak to his people. Sometimes he will speak himself from information which he has carefully acquired. He will have hearty hymn-singing and extempore prayer. He will circulate good and interesting literature upon the subject, will encourage trustworthy members of his flock to collect money, will sometimes take up the subject at the meeting of his parochial guild or communicants' union. In short, he will put forth his best energies in this matter, which is dear to his heart first from his love for the cause—the cause of the Divine Master—and secondly from his anxious desire for the spiritual welfare of the souls entrusted to his charge. In the parish where there is keen interest in the conversion of souls there is spiritual life.

But to return from this digression to the question of the employment of the pastor's time and energies, it is all important to bear in mind that it is his duty to minister, not only to others, but also to himself, to cultivate his faculties, to increase his knowledge of revealed truth, and of the doctrinal, practical, and devotional theology of the Church, that he may become a well-equipped divine, able to deal with the ever-varying questions of the hour.

The Church of England has ever in the past been a learned Church. It has been said to be the most learned Church of Christendom. And the cause of revealed religion owes much to her theologians. God grant that it may always be so! But assuredly, if this is to be the case, the cause of learning must be maintained, even more than in the past, by the cathedral close and the village rectory; for more and more the clergy of the rapidly increasing towns will be taken up with their arduous duties. It will be well, therefore, for the cause of the Church

and for their own usefulness and happiness if the rural clergy will, in accordance with their solemn Ordination vow, "be diligent in the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same."

I fear that there is much room for amendment in this respect; for the habit of study, though greatly conducive to genuine happiness, is, especially by those whose nature tends to indolence, easily lost. "Give attendance to reading," says St. Paul to one whom he had ordained. "Lord, what love I have unto Thy law!" says the Psalmist; "all the day long is my study in it." How can the pastor feed his flock unless he is being perpetually fed himself with the Divine word? The instructed scribe must bring out of his treasures things old and new; but if he is ever giving forth and never adding to his treasure, what will be the result? What but poverty? How can the pastor deal with the important questions of the day unless by the aid of careful reading and thought?

For example, look at the vast and increasing importance of what is called the "higher criticism." How greatly, in the hands of really learned and calmly judging men, it has helped towards the right understanding of the sacred Scriptures; but yet how liable it is, as we have seen, to exaggeration and perversion. You may say, if you please, that, ministering to simple and unlearned rustics, there is no need for you to investigate so deep and difficult a subject. True; but you may be called upon in the future to minister to a more exacting and more highly educated class of people, who may desire help upon such subjects.

And, moreover, how do you know but what you yourself may be in need of help? You may come across some of the positive assertions and wild theories of the more "advanced" (as they are called) of the critics, which directly tend to take away your faith in this or that book of Holy Scripture as being indeed a work of revelation. And if you have not studied the

question you are helpless and sorely tempted. You seem to feel that the foundations are slipping away from under your feet, and a terrible doubt comes over you whether your faith in the Bible will stand. Whereas, it may be, if you had studied the words of our learned and calmly judging theologians, you would have been able to judge between rational criticism and rash and baseless speculations, and would have been fortified against the intrusion of scaring doubts.

In the present age new theories concerning the truths of revelation, varying from the traditional theology of the Church, the offspring of private and uncontrolled judgment, are continually being broached: now it is some new theory of the Atonement which robs it of its pathos and heart-moving power; now it is some new theory concerning the Eucharist which takes away its tender mystery and presents it as a material miracle; now it is a theory concerning miracles which evacuates their evidence of Divine power. The unlearned man is power-

less against these novelties, but the well-equipped divine is forearmed.

Or, to turn to a subject of quite a different kind. There can be no doubt that socialism is the coming subject, that which will increasingly occupy the thoughts of men, and which the clergy of the future will certainly have to face.

What is socialism? Is it to be, root and branch, condemned? Is there a right socialism of which our Lord would approve, and another kind which right-thinking men must condemn as anarchic; if so, how are we to discriminate between the two?

These are important questions which we cannot properly answer without anxious thought and study of the matter on all sides. Yet upon all such questions concerning religion and morality the minister of religion ought to be able to guide those who need guidance.

Study, therefore; careful and serious reading, digested by thought, aided by prayer, is in these days indispensable for the "in-

structed scribe." Perhaps my elder brethren, to whom a good deal that I have said may appear trite, will pardon me for giving a few practical hints upon this subject for the benefit of the younger brethren.

There is an instructive analogy in many respects between the body and the soul, and the manner in which we should treat them.

As the body requires food that its powers may be maintained, so does the soul. As the food taken by the body either strengthens or injures it, so also with the mind. As every meal adds something to the tissues of the body, so I believe every book that is read contributes something, either that which is strengthening, or which is weakening to the mind. The reading of devout devotional books, especially the devotional study of the Bible, strengthens the devotional faculties. The mastering by thought and study books of a thoughtful, intellectual character strengthens the intellect.

As the feeding upon highly seasoned, rich,

made dishes indisposes the appetite for plain, wholesome, nutritious food, so the mentally feeding upon books sensuous, shallow, and exciting, quite indisposes the mind for solid, serious, thoughtful books. I will not speak of books manifestly immoral. But the sensational novels of the day, such as are now often seen upon the drawing-room tables, it may be even upon the tables at the rectory, are often mere rubbish, and sometimes pernicious rubbish. The man who has accustomed his mind to truthful and serious works cannot get through them. They are insipid and wearisome, if not worse.

Doubtless there are exceptions. There are works of fiction of an innocent tendency, of intellectual ability and literary excellence; but I imagine from what I hear that such works are at the present day of rare appearance. The nature of a man's reading is very much a matter of habit. One who has acquired the habit of spending a considerable part of the morning over

the daily newspaper, and frittering away time over the amusing but shallow and useless periodicals, loses the inclination for serious study, and consumes the time which might otherwise be given to that which is useful and elevating. It will be seen, therefore, of what importance it is that early in his ministry the clergyman should acquire, perhaps with some effort and self-restraint, the habit of serious study.

I should strongly advise every clergyman to have always some book of the Greek Testament "on the stocks," and to read it—say for half or three-quarters of an hour after breakfast, or on the return from the day-school—every morning. For this purpose the commentaries of Bishops Lightfoot, Westcott, and Ellicott are invaluable.

I deprecate the reading of the cheap ephemeral works on religion which may be the talk of the hour, and usually deal with the subject of which they treat in a very superficial manner. The time may be better spent in studying the standard works of

theology, works of approved excellence and authority.

The reading should by no means be confined to "pulpit preparation." My own feeling is that the sermon should be the result of thought, of knowledge of the Bible, and of the needs of human nature. Sufficient knowledge of Church doctrine should be assumed for all in Holy Orders. I would deprecate the reading up of too many subjects at the same time, but, for a more thorough knowledge of divinity, would recommend the careful study of one subject at a time.

Take, for example, the doctrine of the Incarnation, or the Atonement, or the Eucharist, study the history of the doctrine and its development, the teaching of some one or two of the best Fathers, *e.g.*, St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom. You may, if you please, read what has been said by the best of the Schoolmen. Study the standard divines of our own branch of the Church, and read what has been written

upon the subject in our own days by divines of acknowledged learning, candour, and loyalty to the Church.

I would say, do not confine your reading to men only of one class of views; if you read Bishop Andrewes and Dr. Pusey on the Eucharist, read also Dr. Waterland. Otherwise you may become narrow and prejudiced.

But, on the other hand, I could not advise the average man to take too wide a scope and read works which oppose or undermine the doctrine of the Church, for so, if not shaken, you might be perplexed and doubtful where indeed the truth really lies. Let the man who has intellectual ability, calmness of judgment, competent learning and sufficient leisure, and who feels himself called upon to deal exhaustively with the whole subject, do so by all means in the spirit of humility and with prayer for God's guidance. But surely for the average young clergyman, whose time and learning are both limited, the safer course is the wiser course.

By what I have said I do not give it as my opinion that the reading of the clergy should be confined to theology. By no means. The English clergyman should be a man of culture.

But I think that both our sacred duties and the value of our time should be taken into consideration, and that our reading should mainly be of books which are instructive and elevating. Those that are only amusing, mere pass-times, should take up very little of our attention, and that only by way of occasional relaxation from work.

With regard to the use of devotional books, I would give this caution—that it is well for us to be upon our guard against that narrowness which is not unlikely to arise from the habitual use of books which are all of one type, as proceeding only from one party in the Church, and possibly therefore set forth only one set of truths, ignoring other truths which are equally a part of our Christian heritage.

Great care should be taken in reading

books by authors of the Roman communion, translated from the French and Italian. They sometimes contain beautiful thoughts. But their theology is not ours, and they tend to foster a different spirit from that of the Church of which we are ministers.

The best correction of any evils which may possibly spring from the use of devotional books is to be found in the devotional study of the Bible. I need not, I feel sure, commend to you the blessed practice of meditation. In every point of view it is simply invaluable. It, by God's peace, influences, enlightens, and strengthens the intellect, the heart, and the will. It has been said, and I believe with truth, that the habitual devout practice of meditation is incompatible with wilful continuance in any known sin. Either the practice will kill the habit or the habit the sin.

I conclude my remarks upon the reading of the parish priest by strongly recommending all of you, my brethren, to join the "Central Society of Sacred Study." You

would obtain the best advice from some of the most competent theologians of the Church as to what books, English or foreign, to read or to avoid, concerning any branch of theological study or any particular doctrine of the Church. Books will be recommended to you, and you will be advised how to obtain the loan of books that you require. You will find this society of the greatest help to you.

It is all important for us in the conduct of our lives to bear in mind our object. As ordained ministers of the gospel we exist, not for ourselves, but to fulfil the object which Christ, our Saviour, had in view in the institution of His ministry, *i.e.*, to promote the salvation of souls.

How greatly our troubles and drawbacks in the Church would be diminished if we and our brethren would believe and remember this, that we exist not for ourselves or our own profit, not merely to discharge functions and to fulfil a round of observances, reading prayers, and preaching

so many times a week, but to achieve a definite purpose.

“I will make you,” said the Lord to those who were our representatives, “fishers of men.” The fisherman is not satisfied with having cast the net so many times per week. He works for results—the catching of the prey. So we, in our ministry, must have a definite object before us—the saving of precious souls, the winning of men from sin to righteousness, from unbelief to a saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to His glory and their everlasting happiness. A ministry which has not this definite object always in view is wanting in its proper purpose. And to this object all else should be subordinate.

In my several addresses I have spoken of various branches of our exterior ministry, but have left to the last the most important matter of all in the pastorate of souls, viz., the personal character of the pastor himself.

That this is of the utmost moment to the

pastor himself with regard both to this world and the next is obvious to every Christian. But my present point is that it is of the very last importance with regard to the success of his ministry. The one indispensable requisite for the priesthood is personal holiness. The man of brilliant abilities or of attractive manners may win popularity ; it is the man of God that wins souls.

With regard to the estimate which men make of their parish priest, it is not so much what he says, nor even what he does, that is of primary importance, but what he is. And whether or not we are men of brilliant abilities or of attractive natural qualities, this is certain, that, by the grace of God which is proffered to us, we can all become men of God. And according to the teaching of Holy Scripture this we not only can be, but must be.

Study the pastoral epistles, and you will see how prominently the Apostle puts forward the necessity of holiness of life in God's minister. Timothy, the "man of God,"

was to take heed unto himself as well as to the doctrine which he taught; and was to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." The man of God was to be "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Titus was to "show himself in all things a pattern of good works."

Our Divine Master lays down a principle which is strikingly applicable to us, that "Unto whomsoever much is given, of them much shall be required." For assuredly in the realm of spiritual things much has been given to us. To whom has more been given? Therefore of us much will be required.

And our people, too, naturally expect much of us, and are quick to notice any inconsistency in the life of the priest. Who can estimate the harm that has been done by careless, self-pleasing, worldly clergy! Thus many have been alienated from religion itself.

Even the very ministrations of religion appear to men to lose their virtue if there be not the proper correspondence

to them in the life of God's ministers. For example, when the parishioners hear their pastor preaching the blessed truths of the gospel and of the necessity of a holy life, does it not make all the difference to them whether they can or cannot say, "Yes! And he is a good man himself, and believes with all his heart, and tries with all his heart, to practise what he preaches." If they cannot say this, but rather the reverse, how unreal the whole affair appears to them!

It is for us, then, to remember, being taught by Holy Scripture, that the priest of the Church is called upon not to lead the ordinary life of respectable men of the world, but the higher life, the consecrated life. Now, the form of consecration of the Aaronic priest (Exod. xxix.) is very significant and worthy of our study. Their old clothes were to be put away, and, their bodies being washed, they were to put on new garments, this signifying that at their ordination they were to get rid of the sinful, unworthy past, be cleansed by penitence, and begin a new life.

The truth that they who were to minister to others must first be themselves reconciled to God was shown by the mystical transference of their sins to the victim that was to be slain before the Lord. They were to be anointed with holy oil, symbol of the gift of the Holy Ghost, "for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God." And the great truth that their whole life was to be consecrated to God was set forth symbolically by their identifying themselves, by the laying on of their hands, with the ram, which was then to be offered as a whole burnt offering to the Lord.

Surely these things were not written only for them! Is there to be less of self-consecration for the priests of the new covenant? See how the Lord Jesus called the apostles to leave father and mother and all, to follow Him and take up the ministry of souls. See how during the course of His ministry He was preparing them for the evangelic priesthood. See how they fulfilled their ministry. Wonderful

sight! Unique! Actuated by the love of souls, they deliberately turned their backs upon the world, and surrendered their whole lives to the work. So St. Paul says to St. Timothy (1, iv. 15), "Meditate upon these things," or, better, "Practise these things"—"Be diligent in these things" (R.V.). Give thyself wholly to them (*ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι*, "*in his esto*," Vulg.).

We are to be wholly immersed in sacred things and give ourselves wholly to them.

The account of the three who were willing to follow our Lord, but with reservations (Luke ix. 57-62), is well worthy of our meditation. One He warns that he will have to surrender all comforts. He says to the second, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach." To the third He declares, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The work, the holy cause, is to be abandoned for nothing: "Deny thyself, the world forsake, and humbly follow after Me."

Nor can it be consistently urged that we in modern days may lawfully aim at a lower standard. The mind of the Church of England in this matter is set before us in words that we ought all to remember (Ordination of Priests): "We have good hope that you have clearly determined by God's grace to give yourselves wholly to this office, whereto it hath pleased God to call you. So that, as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way." "Ye ought to forsake and set aside (as much as you may) all worldly cares and studies." "Will you be diligent in prayers and in reading of the Holy Scripture, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?"

This consecration of the whole life to God's service involves the idea of perfect consistency of life. Our great Example was absolutely consistent in His life. There were no painful contrasts in the life of Jesus.

He is the same man at the marriage feast, in the house of Simon, in the garden and on the Cross. He has never been even charged with inconsistency.

But we clergy, His poor ministers, feel the awful danger of a divorce between our official and private life.

How difficult, what grace does it need, to preserve due harmony between the words spoken in the dining-room, in society, or in the bedroom, and those uttered in the pulpit or in ministering to individual souls. That priest is happy who, when preaching on the graces of the Christian life, does not wince as he thinks that the members of his family and his servants are listening to his words. We bear about the Holy Spirit within us. Christ dwells in our hearts. All the departments of life must be under the influence of the Spirit of holiness. "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God." We have to do with Christ not only at our prayers, at our ministrations, in the Blessed

Sacrament. He is the King of the whole life. The whole life must be consecrated by the power of the Incarnation.

We bear it in mind, then, that the paramount object of the life of the priest is to glorify God by saving the souls of men. It is for this purpose that as a priest he exists, to be a "fisher of men."

How glorious an object in life! Unselfish, exalting! How glorious to co-operate in this with the Son of God! We are "fellow-workers with God." All this shows us what should be our motive. Love—love of Jesus and love of souls for Jesus' sake. The two cannot be separated nor subsist alone. "He that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." It is only the grace of love that will enable the priest to fulfil his ministry. It must be the fervent love of souls that will inspire his preaching. It is love that enables him to minister to the sinful and the suffering. It is their perception that holy love actuates his words that will touch their hearts. It is love alone

that moves him to wipe the sweat from the brow of the dying. How then, we ask, can we acquire this great grace, perhaps the rarest of all graces, the love of souls?

You will remember—who can ever forget?—that wonderful scene at the Galilæan lake narrated by St. John xxi. 1-20. The early morning; the risen Saviour recognised through the dim atmosphere by the young loving eyes of St. John. St. Peter, in his ardent affection, plunges into the lake—first, for reverence' sake, wrapping his fisher's coat about him. Full of love, astonishment, and delight, he shrinks from asking the Master who He is, but in his excitement, at a word from Jesus, he alone draws the net to land which all of them had been dragging through the water.

And then, after the meal, there comes that wondrous dialogue. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me with the exalted love of Divine charity?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee with a personal love." Then the same question and the same answer

repeated. Then the third time the Lord varies His question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me with a personal love?" Peter was grieved at this question, for it seemed to throw doubt upon his strong personal love for his Saviour. And so he bursts out eagerly, "Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou seest that I love Thee." "Then feed My sheep."

Ah! had Simon Peter not truly loved Jesus we may well believe that he would not have received his great commission. But Jesus, knowing his ardent personal love to Himself, knew that He would love His sheep for His sake, and so entrusted them to his care.

Now, St. Peter was the representative of the Christian priesthood. How interesting it is to observe in St. Peter's first Epistle what appear to be reminiscences of his memorable conversation with our Lord. "Feed the flock of God." "When the chief Shepherd shall appear" (v. 2, 4). "The Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (ii. 25). Note, also, how he describes the love of his

converts for the Lord Jesus as that exalted spiritual love (*ἀγαπᾶτε* 1, 8) which in his sweet humility he had shrunk from predi-
cating of himself.

And so from this wonderful incident we have lessons of the utmost value. (1) The primary motive for the Christian pastorate is personal devotion to the Lord Jesus; (2) love of Jesus infallibly leads to the love of souls, love of those for whom He died, even as He died for us; (3) therefore the way to acquire this longed-for love of souls is to deepen in our hearts the love of Jesus.

If, then, you long for this great grace of the love of souls, deepen in your hearts the love of Jesus. Think more about Him. Practise the blessed habit of meditation, especially meditation upon the words and passion of the Saviour. Gaze upon His photograph as it is exhibited in the undying pages of the Gospels. Realise your sins, your lost condition, and your deliverance by His Cross. Think of His glory and His sufferings. Behold Him

“openly crucified before your eyes” in the commemorative sacrifice of the Eucharist.

In a word, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit sought and obtained by prayer, realise all that you owe to Him and His love for you, and in proportion as your love to Him grows in your soul, so will your love grow to your brethren whom He loves, and for whom He died, even as He died for you.

The life of God's minister should be the Christian life upon its highest level. And this can only be lived by the power of the Holy Ghost and under the supreme motive of love. Love means the earnest desire to promote the happiness of those whom we love. So we shall work for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, that in souls redeemed by Him, “a great multitude which no man can number,” He may “see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” And our love for our fellow-men will be shown in our desire and endeavours to be “fellow-workers with God” in saving souls. And then upon “love” will come the other fruits of the spirit, “joy” and “peace.”

Surely, if there be any one whose heart should be full of joy, it is the priest of the Church in the exercise of his ministry. Surely the evangelic priesthood is the most exalted of all dignities, for in it the poor, frail, sinful man is brought into the most intimate communion with God. We in our twofold priesthood minister to God as the representatives of His believing people, and minister to His beloved children on behalf of God. We are God's ministers. We are the friends of Christ.

See the love of the Saviour for the ministry which He instituted. Such is the union between His ministers and Himself that He identifies Himself and His honour with them. "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me. He that despiseth you despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me." If a city reject His ministers, it were better for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city. He has special care for His ministers. "The hairs of your head are all numbered." "Fear not, little

flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." These were sayings addressed to His poor halting, frail ministers.

Let us remember that we are the "sons of God," "partakers of the Divine nature." The Divine seed is in us. The Holy Ghost has been given to us. Through the Spirit dwelling in us we are continually holding communion with God. We are the representatives and companions and friends of the Saviour. We are called upon and empowered to speak to His people on behalf of the Lord of heaven and earth.

Surely such a thought should humble us to the very dust. "Who is sufficient for these things?" sighs the holy Apostle. And if he could say so, what must you and I say! "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips." Surely humbleness of mind, an utter consciousness of demerit, is the very first requirement for a minister of the gospel of salvation.

Yet, on the other hand, there will be a grateful, joyous sense of the possession of the exalted honour. St. Paul realises that

equally with the sense of his own personal unworthiness: "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord, who hath enabled me, putting me into the ministry who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious. But I obtained mercy." "Think of God," cries God's minister, "having called me, me, being what I am and what God knows me to be, to this high calling, this supreme dignity! O loving Father! O merciful Saviour!"

And surely this joy, "the joy of the Lord, will be his strength." Is it not a joy to the pastor to be permitted to preach the glad tidings of great joy, to be a true evangelist, to bring the good news of salvation accomplished? Sunday is to him the happy day whereon especially he is privileged to speak of his Saviour's love. Is it not a joy to him to bring peace to the troubled soul, to pronounce to the sinner, being penitent, the absolution and remission of his sins, to hold intimate intercourse with holy souls, to know—though he must watch anxiously against self-complacency—that he has been

used by the Holy Spirit to bring sinners to their Saviour, to obtain the gift of eternal life?

Oh! There can be no joy upon earth so sweet, so pure, as that which God bestows upon his poor minister. Let us cherish this joy. Let us hold this "secret of the Lord" close to our heart. A stranger cannot share it. It will be a stimulus to our flagging zeal, a consolation in sorrow, a strength against temptation, an assurance of Divine love.

It is true there is the thought of our personal unworthiness, our miserable insufficiency. Yet the apostles, frail men, ever had the same thought before them, and notwithstanding, as their minds and writings show, were always truly happy men. For there was the blessed belief in the infinite mercy of their Father in Heaven. And the same belief is ours. For "He knoweth whereof we are made. He remembereth that we are but dust."

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