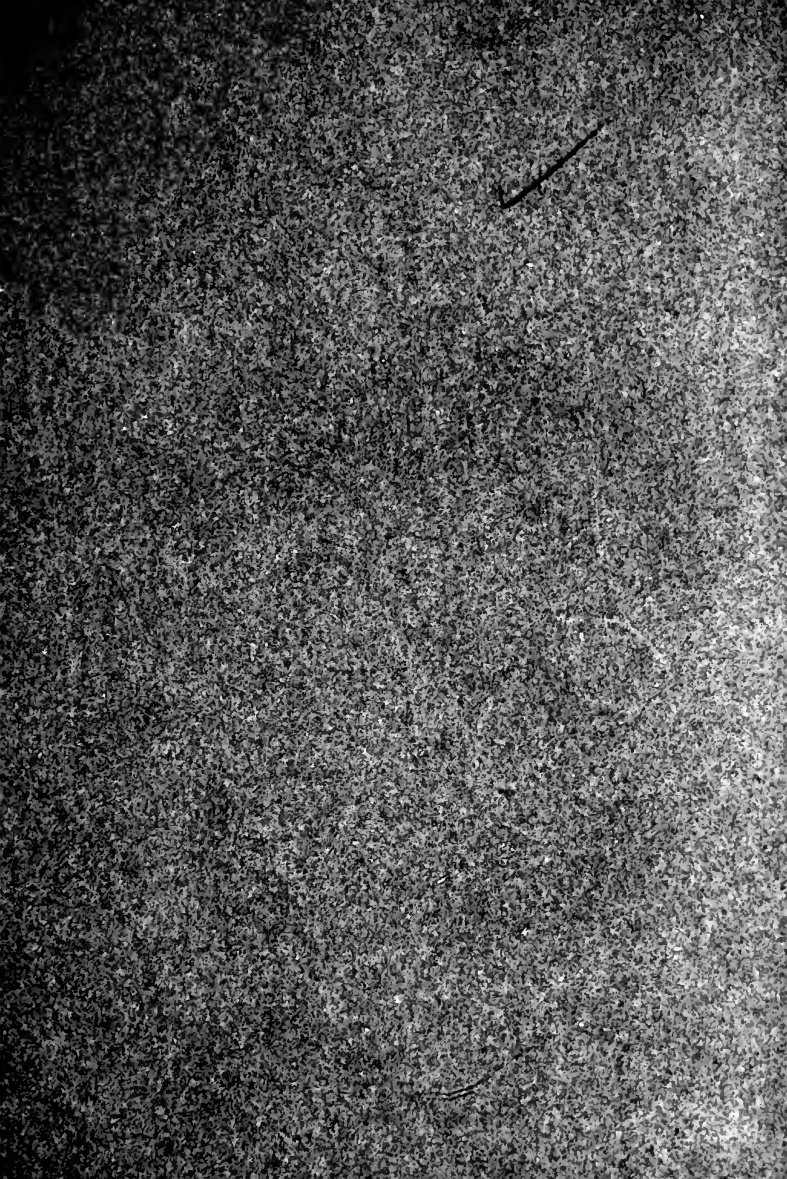




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TEMPER.  
SELF-DISCIPLINE.

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TWO ADDRESSES TO THE CLERGY,

DELIVERED IN

St. Paul's Cathedral:

BY

R. W. CHURCH, M.A., D.C.L.

*Dean of St. Paul's.*

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## TEMPER ;

*An Address delivered to the Junior Clergy Society  
in the Crypt of St. Paul's, Oct. 12, 1880.*

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IN the few words which you expect me to say to you, I suppose that you look for some suggestions to be offered to your consideration touching practical things—our hopes, our risks, our difficulties, our temptations. It is obvious that anything that can be presented to you in this short time can be but in the way of thoughts, questions, hints, left with you, to be dealt with by yourselves afterwards.

I will venture so to offer to you the subject which I will call—I will explain myself further—the subject of *temper*. And by this—this curiously ambiguous but expressive word, meaning at once the restraint of feelings and the very reverse—I mean, not temper, as we call it, shown in the intercourse of society, nor temper shown in argument, nor temper under provocation, nor temper under the troubles and disagreeables of life ; but temper, in our habits of mind and thought and feeling, towards the facts and

circumstances which surround our condition, which affect our opinions, our position, our conscience, our duty, and with respect to which we have to exercise judgment and choice. I mean the permanent and recurring impatience and irritation sometimes produced in the mind, by a state of facts which continually cuts across our wishes, jars with our tastes, upsets our theories, or baffles our practical efforts; which seems to us wrong or absurd, but which we cannot alter; which mocks and defies our reason, or our sense of right, or our good feeling, but also defies our strength. Examples of what I mean are to be seen in the chronic irritation of large classes of mankind at the inequality of conditions; or, to take a different subject, in the impatience felt by some good men at the impossibility of putting down war altogether among men professing to be reasonable as well as Christian. The Psalter, which knows and reflects every phase and shade of human experience, knows this—‘I was sore troubled: I said in my haste all men are liars.’ . . . ‘My feet were almost gone, my treadings had well-nigh slipped; and why? I was grieved at the wicked; I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity. . . . Lo, these are the ungodly; these prosper in the world, and these have riches in



possession ; and I said, Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. . . . Yea, and I had almost said even as they ; but lo, then I should have condemned the generation of thy children. . . . Thus my heart was grieved, and it went even through my reins.' It is the state of mind of which the expressive picture is given us in the story of the prophet Jonah, who tried to evade a service in which he thought he might be used, and then discredited ; who quarrelled with God's mercy because it did not square with his own prophecy ; and who, in answer to his Master's twice-repeated remonstrance, 'Dost thou well to be angry?'—bitterly insisted, 'I do well to be angry, even unto death.'

This habitual allowance and nourishing of temper and irritation at a state of facts is plainly a characteristic of some minds, and some minds, too, of the highest order. It is an entirely different thing from simply the presence or the bursting forth of indignation and wrath. To be in the presence of unquestionable injustice or baseness, and not to feel wrath burn at it, is not to be of the mind which the Bible reflects. And there cannot be the seriousness and earnestness and zeal which are essential to all high human

character, to say nothing of all high Christian character, without a man chafing and being provoked, when he finds stupidity or selfishness or laziness or insincerity in his way. Nor am I speaking of that energy, that determination, that fire of hostility, which may animate a great spirit against a great abuse, or a great enemy of truth and goodness against the truth and goodness which he would destroy, or a great fanatic against the barriers of reason and good sense which thwart his course. In the great conflicts for good or for evil alike, strong hatreds must play as large a part as strong enthusiasms. But I am not speaking of this. I am speaking of what we all understand when we speak of a man *showing temper*; or having that weakness and defect in his way of dealing with matters which we know by the name of temper, whether irritable, or querulous, or acrimonious, or despondent and gloomy.

And I think no one can read history, or watch contemporary action, without observing what a part this plays in affairs, quite apart from differences of view or object, and without seeing that this is a distinct characteristic of some men, and makes the difference between them and others like them, or engaged on the same side, or influenced by the same general principles. It

may be affectation : just as there are people who think it fine to be out of health, there are people who think it a mark of being deep, or honest, or conscientious to show temper at what they find out of joint in the world. It may, of course, be something infinitely poor, mean, peevish, captious, childishy perverse ; but the thing is, that it need not at all necessarily be this. It may be the quality of an elevated, not to say of a really noble nature. A man of such a nature, otherwise strong and generous, may be so out of harmony with certain fixed conditions of things round him, may be so possessed by a fierce abiding wrath against certain classes, or institutions, or arrangements which clash with his ideas or stand in the way of his objects, is so much at the mercy of a chronic irritation against them, that the notion of an equitable judgment from him on anything connected with them is simply ludicrous, and the mere mention of them is sure to call up the expression of his antipathy and scorn. The contrast between temper, in this sense, and the patience and self-control opposed to it, is sometimes very marked in men who start together on the same course. I will venture to refer to two examples which occur to me ; and I will take them beyond the sphere of our own

communion. Some of you may have seen two recent biographies of men who left our communion in the storms of forty years ago, Mr. Allies and Mr. Sibthorp. They were both men of high honour and purpose, and their stories—an autobiography in one case—are both of much interest. But the one, while showing ready self-sacrifice for principle, the loss of much that men prize to follow what seemed the call of God, is marked, as it seems to me, from first to last, by temper, blinding the eyes, embittering controversy, giving no chance to justice. The other, a story, too, of strange vacillations of opinion, is *as* marked by patience, sweetness, equity—the power and the bands of sympathy lasting unbroken, when the agreement in principle and conviction, and the ties of habit and association, were shattered. The other instance of what I mean is from the French Church. At the beginning of the second quarter of the century the Abbé Lamennais seemed to have roused the French Church from intellectual slumber and political servility. He struck a chord of response in many hearts; among them of one who was to be the greatest of modern French preachers, Lacordaire. But things did not go smoothly with these daring spirits and logical reasoners. Stubborn facts rose in their way, even

where they most looked for support. They found, baffling or threatening them at every step, the fears, the jealousies, the fixed traditions, the wise caution, the convenient understandings, the accommodations, the inertness, the diplomatic craft which were the growth of a thousand years in the Roman Court. Strong and sanguine as they were, these powers were stronger. Then began the trial of temper—the trial of seeing brilliant theories more and more in disaccord with realities, of seeing authority making short work of logic, of meeting distrust and disapproval of what it had cost them so much to offer, of being reminded at each turn and in all sorts of indirect ways that they were practically wrong. Lamennais' was not a character which could stand such a trial. From the first, passion—eager, headlong, scornful passion—had been as strong with him as his powerful and ambitious intellect. And when with his acknowledged successes he still found that he could not move the world as he would, that the latent necessities of a system and its intangible powers of resistance were too much for him, a fierce bitterness of temper, increasing by perpetual indulgence, took possession of his soul. Not Rome only, for which he had invented new arguments, nor the Pope, whom he would

have made absolute over the modern world, but Christianity, but religion itself, were at last enveloped in his disgust and despair. Lacordaire, too, made up his mind. I don't know how far he avowedly gave up theories which he found would not work; he always maintained a very independent though not a recalcitrant, or disobedient position; but he learned to devote his life to adorning, as best he could, the Sparta which had been given him as his lot. One man's temper, it is impossible not to see it, was the leading influence to intellectual change, and had much, if not all, to do in breaking up his position; it drove him from his moorings, and sent him adrift into the 'wild and wandering sea' of doubt. The other, more patient and self-commanding, it may be more yielding, when he found what he could *not* do—create an ideal Papacy—tried what he *could* do. He was content to accept, without quarrelling with it, a state of facts which he did not like, but could not alter: to work in the harness provided for him by an ordering which was not his own: to merge his personal mortifications and disappointments in larger interests to which he had devoted life. And he stirred, as no other preacher had stirred, the religious heart of France. Perhaps to us here the stormy

career calls forth the keener interest. In view of the Master's judgment-seat, Who commissioned both, it is a different matter.

Great and difficult questions are round us, and are likely to increase in proportion as we realise what words mean and what things are with which we have to deal. These, then, are days when we have all of us to watch against the insidious influences of temper, which often comes in a noble guise, as generous indignation, plain-speaking, the courage of our opinions. None of us are likely to find the actual state of facts round us quite what we should like.—There are limits, for instance, to our knowledge of what it is most important for us to know; and we fret against these limits. Why should not questions have been answered which a word might have settled? Why should we not be *certain*, when we *must act as if* we were certain? Nothing is so trying to the temper as untying knots; and men are sometimes led to declare that we have not the knowledge which we *may* have, because we cannot have the knowledge which we desire.—Theology, again, the result of the continued action of human minds and hearts on the wondrous revelation of God's mind, so definite here, so impenetrably dark there—theology, with its neces-

sarily technical apparatus and language, with its hard outlines, with the audacities, the pettinesses, the refinements, the extravagances, which have as necessarily accompanied its development among creatures like ourselves, not only repels some minds, but is a subject so uncongenial to the taste of the day that it disturbs their equanimity and their good sense. We see in their judgments about it the unmistakable stamp of temper. They have not patience to examine the use of what has occupied some of the mightiest and most devout of human intellects. They do not ask how we could have done without it. They contrast its dryness and subtlety with the freedom and poetry of Scripture. They might as well accuse Newton's *Principia* for not of itself evoking the feelings called forth by the starry heavens on a summer night; or expect from a scientific treatise on Harmony what they get from the compositions of Handel or Beethoven.—Again, it is very trying to many minds to find the facts of our social order so hard to deal with; or, again, to find the reality of the Christian Church so unlike the ideal. It has been and is a sore trial to many to find that an institution like the Church is not as saintly, or not as consistent, or not as free, or not as keen in inquiry, or not as



comprehensive, or not as definite, or not as improving as they could wish. It is equally a trial to others that society will go on in customs which cannot be defended in argument ; that people will stick to conclusions when the old reasons for them seem gone ; that they will not open their eyes to truths which to the improvers seem self-evident. Men engaged in these discussions have reason to be on their guard against the gradual growth and the constant unfelt presence of temper, all the more in proportion as they feel deeply, and are disinterested and sincere. It may easily come to govern them—that is, to cloud their judgment, and disable their capacity for fairness and truth.

*Noli æmulari* ; Μὴ παραζήλου ; *Fret not thyself*—is the Psalmist's thrice-repeated burden in Psalm xxxvii., when he contemplates what Bishop Butler calls 'the infinite disorders of the world.' *Noli æmulari*, should be one of the most oft-repeated watchwords with us, who have to deal in our time and sphere, as best we may, with these disorders. We may need it, when honestly constructing a plain and intelligent theory of the things that most concern us and our work, and when the actual facts of history and life give us trouble ; for whatever our theories, we shall be

sure to meet with something inconvenient and perplexing, which we could wish out of the way. We shall need it in our practical efforts after improvement ; for, take what line we may, we shall be sure to meet with hindrances which we cannot account for, and checks which we had not expected. We shall need it when we are going with the flow and rise of the tide. We need it when, perhaps, our part of the work is done, when we find ourselves on the defeated or failing side, playing a losing game, fighting for what seems a beaten,—its enemies, sometimes shortsightedly, call it—a lost cause. And this is likely to happen to most of us, if only we live long enough ;—if only for this, that things get out of date ; and what was young becomes old ; and arguments, theories, books, once fresh and attractive, are left behind, worn out and used up, at least in their old forms, with the friends who are gone, and the scenes we have done with ; and new ideas and assumptions and ways push aside and take the place of those with which we began. Any one, I suppose, who has gone through the ups and downs, the successes and failures, of great political or social or religious movements, and has the courage, looking back at a distance upon its course, to see not only its

victories, but its false steps, its follies, and its mistakes, will place, foremost among these mistakes, the mistakes of temper. He will see how often things *right* were not *rightly* done; how often, in heat and exasperation, matters were pushed to needless extremity and violence; how often accidents were raised to the dignity of essentials, and trifles blown up to the importance of principles; how often, for the sake of a present advantage in argument, a gross exaggeration was snatched at, an extreme or perilous position fought for, bringing on those committed to it disaster and trouble. He will see what mischief has come from that *splendida bilis* which at the time seemed so natural and so grand; how much has been lost by not allowing for the mere slowness, the ignorance, the perplexities of others. These are common, if not inevitable, concomitants of great efforts and conflicts in the greatest causes, when men are the fighters. They should not make us desist from the war against the manifold evils of the world; they should not make us regret having had our share, if so be, with all the mistakes, in such conflicts, in which we now see how many things might have been much better done. They are not a palliation for faintheartedness and hanging back, when it is plain that ven-

tures must be made for Christ's sake. But they help those whose experience reflects them, to see new force and meaning in the Psalmist's warning—*Noli æmulari*. I remember seeing, in a country house of Catherine de Medicis, near the Loire, roughly scratched on the guardroom wall, probably by some English or Scotch attendant, or messenger, or soldier of her bodyguard, who had witnessed what had come of St. Bartholomew and the wars of the League, the words—‘*The yre of man wryketh not the justice of God.*’ It was a strange inscription for such a place. It was like an echo from the sixteenth century itself, from the very centre and depths of its darkness and cruelty, bearing witness to the eternal truth which, more than any other age, that century set at nought and trampled on—which we know in the familiar words, ‘The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.’ No, indeed; the wrath of man may be God's scourge and punishment. But the work of God's righteousness, the work of that Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Charity, Whose servants we are, and Whom we are now going to meet in the Holy Sacrament, needs cool heads and self-commanding spirits, as well as pure hearts and unflinching purpose and zeal that counts not the cost.

## SELF-DISCIPLINE ;

*An Address delivered on the Day of Devotion  
for the Clergy, appointed by the Bishop to  
be observed at St. Paul's, Nov. 16, 1880.*

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YOU have heard this morning of the place which *Sympathy* must occupy in the Ministry of Grace<sup>1</sup>: in the Ministry of that Gospel, of which the leading note is the sympathy of the Creator with His creatures in their terrible distress, and in their strange aspirations—the wonderful sympathy of Him, Who though He is so high, yet humbleth Himself to behold the things in heaven and earth, and despiseth not the work of His own hands—the awful sympathy of the most Holy, who for love of us refused not “to be touched with, to sympathize with, the feeling of our infirmities;” to be “tempted like as we are, yet without sin;” to win “the power,” by

<sup>1</sup> The subject of Bishop Claughton's address.

suffering temptation himself, "to succour them that are tempted." A minister of Christ cannot think too much of the demands or of the power of sympathy.

Sympathy is going out to others. I will ask you now for a few moments to enter into yourselves, and consider something of what we have to do at home, to fit ourselves for our hard and exacting work abroad. I will ask you to give some thoughts to the subject of *Self-discipline*. St. Paul opposes to the "spirit of fear,"—that *δειλία*, that meanness of heart, that coward and craven shrinking from responsibility and effort, which is portrayed in the unprofitable servant who could find nothing to do with his one talent—St. Paul opposes to this, that triple characteristic of all high action on human souls—"the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"—*δύναμις, ἀγάπη, σωφρονισμός*—energy, charity, discipline in its work and its results. And those whose work in life is to discipline others in the ways of truth and holiness must begin by taking much heed to the discipline of themselves. Vigour and activity are always in danger of becoming imperious or absorbing. Love may degenerate imperceptibly into self-pleasing dreaminess. Both need the corrective

of a manly severity, at least with ourselves; of the spirit of sober self-command—what our version calls, 'a sound mind.'

Each heart and conscience knows well where it needs this self-discipline most: whether to curb temper, or to conquer sloth and hatred of trouble, or to brave the face of man and endure without flinching under his words and scorn, or painfully and hardly to keep down the thoughts and imaginations and seeds of evil, sown in the soul by the sins of long ago against purity and light, and never perhaps to be quite extirpated while we live. Will you forgive me, if I venture to suggest a few points, by way of sample, of that self-discipline which our calling requires.

1. Most clergymen have, by the necessity of their position, besides the great and paramount interest of their vocation and ministry, secondary and subordinate interests running along side of it. Some of these are the inevitable outcrop of a clergyman's employment and activity. Some of them are in their measure and degree, legitimate. If he is doing his work well, he cannot well help feeling one of the greatest pleasures in life, the pleasure of good work for good work's sake, the pleasure of doing his work according to the aim and desire of his heart. He cannot help

having the pleasure which a really great commander has in the risk and hard work of a well conducted war, the pleasure which the artist or the thinker or the discoverer have in those exercises of power and energy, which though full of toil and perhaps mixed with disappointment, yet answer to the purpose and effort of the soul. Then, as he is still tied to life and society, there are the interests of his family, and of those he cares for ; his social position, the sphere which he would like to fill, the fair openings to influence and power, his character in the world, the kindness with which others think of him and treat him. These secondary interests cannot but have a place in our thoughts. There is no one who has not to do with some of them. Most men have to reckon with a great many. And yet we all know—it is written on the history of the Church—how these secondary interests, these inevitable, and some of them, legitimate companions of our highest activities and our indispensable occupations, may by their very familiarity, their humble, every-day necessity, steal away our hearts, and, almost without our knowing it, really take the place of the one master interest of a clergyman's life. We of all men need a vigilant self-discipline against that



selfishness which, in one form or another, is ever lying in wait for every human being: the selfishness which makes an idol of our very activity, of our very affections, of our very duty; which welcomes the secret elation of success, which allows itself to dwell on the worldly prospects of that success, which cannot tear away thought and imagination from the flattering consciousness of having preached well, or written well, or acted well. I say nothing of the grosser temptations of worldly interest, though few men are strong enough to make light of them and undervalue them. I say nothing of the tendencies which carry the strong, the resolute, the practical, into impatience and mere self-will: the love of having their own way, and doing everything by their own hand. I say nothing of the perils to the man himself of that combination of high intellect and high enthusiasm, which makes even the world attend; of that power over the secrets of hearts, that gift of piercing to the roots, of seeing and holding up unsuspected truths, which has often put to shame the preacher himself, when he thinks what he has said, and made him feel that among the things he will least like to meet at the last day are his own sermons. It is not these only, but the humbler and more unobtru-

sive by-interests of our lives, which make a demand on us for vigilant self-discipline.

2. Again, we need self-discipline, amid the sweet and tender and softening influences, amid which many of us live, and from which even the hardest life among us is not entirely cut off. Family life is a noble and blessed thing, with its sacredness, its venerable associations, its solemn, even eternal bonds, its ties and affections wrapped round our heart of hearts, its holy or touching memories, like no other in the world: but surely it is a thing in which a clergyman needs to think a good deal of self-discipline. And besides this, a clergyman, if he is doing his work well, if he is deeply in earnest and is recognized as being so, if he can speak to men's hearts and souls, can help them to see light in the darkness, can elicit from them the response of conviction and sympathy, is in time surrounded by an atmosphere of affection and reverence, very helpful to his great objects, but not quite safe to himself. He has to deal with people, many of them very dear to him, who love and admire and largely, perhaps boundlessly, trust him—trust him with all they value—trust him even to the grave. Besides the strong, there are the weak. Besides the rough, there are the gentle,

the enthusiastic, the tender-hearted, the confiding, the devout. Besides men, there are women. He who has to be all things to all men in their needs, has to think of all. And now more than ever, God be thanked for it, the ministry and service of women is become one of the established parts and helps of a clergyman's own ministry, part of the regular system of a well organized parish. He has to do largely with them, as sufferers, counsellors, workers; with invalids and troubled in mind; with widow and fatherless; with district visitors, with nursing sisters, with ladies, well-born perhaps and cultivated, who have given themselves to reclaim the lost, to serve the penitent, the miserable, the poor. In spite of all terrible realities of hardship and stern endurance, this presents the soft, the tender side of religious service. Surrounded by it, looked up to for inspiration and guidance, a clergyman has to keep control over himself, that only its wholesome influences affect him. He *may* let it be too much to him. He may accommodate himself unwisely to it. He may allow it too much power over his judgments. He may let it insensibly give a bias to his teaching and his thoughts. He may let it steal away something from manliness and sober strength. Such undue

yielding of the stronger to the weaker is no uncommon sight anywhere, and it has been seen in the history of religion. The highest purpose, the highest purity, the most austere self-denial, has not always kept off the touch of the sentimental or the effeminate. It was an abatement on the majestic sweetness of Fénelon. It was not always absent from the steady and masculine strength of Port Royal. A clergyman has need of self-discipline, lest all that is tender and consoling round him tempt him into softness, and weaken the fibre of character, of doctrine, of conscience, even of devotion and worship.

3. To take another point. We are called to be busy men, to be critical men, to be faithful men in witness and rebuke, to be outspoken, to be staunch to our trust, to resist evil. What offices these, calling for severe and honest self-discipline. How easy, from being busy, to become bustling, officious, fussy. How easy to see only our own field of activity, and forget that there are others as important beyond it. How easy, from being justly watchful for strictness and duty, to become censorious, one-sided, hasty in blaming. How easy, from being zealous against error and falsehood, to become unauthorised meddlers with the business and the

burdens of others, intolerable disturbers of the liberty of others, accomplices in injustice, self-satisfied denouncers of what we have not taken the trouble to understand, stupidly malignant in our narrow and shallow dogmatism. How easy, in our fear and hatred of compromise, and of betraying principle, to be stiff, hard, impracticable. It is the old story; our faults and blunders mask under the disguise of our noblest duties. But the very gravity of our office, the necessity laid upon us to judge, to condemn, to take a strong line, to guard our sacred trust, to make no peace with evil, makes it all the more our duty to bridle, not our tongues only, but our hearts; to strive after that calmness and breadth and equity which ought to be in all clothed with authority; that self-command which belongs to all sound human judgment: that large considerate forbearance, that *ἐπιεικεία*, which was one of the favourite virtues of the most fiery of men, the apostle St. Paul.

4. Once more:—we live in a time of great conflicts of thought and opinion, amid the rapid growth of new, daring, ambitious ideas, which challenge submission, or at least enquiry. And not only new ideas, but some of the oldest and most familiar appear in new aspects. A recent writer

has marked the difference when a man passes from "what he knows," to what he "not only knows, but *imagines*."<sup>1</sup> Great ideas may lie long dormant in our minds, known and conventional—the ideas of a miracle, of sin, of eternal righteousness, of the forgiveness of sins, of the atonement, of the Incarnation, of God:—then all at once, the reality of their meaning bursts upon our thoughts, and they astonish us by their stupendous and unearthly wonder, to which nothing here, nothing that we deal with, is like or commensurate. And the unveiling is sometimes overpowering: the mind staggers under their awful greatness.<sup>2</sup> Again, on all sides of us, in the teeming literature of the day, appealing to our love of truth, soliciting our assent, defying our disproof, touching our sense of consistency, taking certainty for granted, displaying the attractions of bold, and strong, and clear, and complete exposition, are theories, systems, philosophies, criticisms, histories; pictures, drawn by science, illuminated by imagination and poetry, of society, of religion, of nature and the world. Shut ourselves out from it all, of course we may, if we choose: but they are the things which interest and influence

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is Mr. Kinglake's.

<sup>2</sup> See Mozley's Bampton Lectures, pp. 3-6.

the living people who are the objects of our charge. In the face of all this, does not mind and imagination, and thought need the help of serious, careful, self-discipline? that inner guard over impressions and assent, that combination of mistrust and frank candour, which will make us proof, not against the claims of truth, but the snares of plausibility: which holding fast to proved convictions, will let us keep our mind open to the light. We need, many of us, a steady consciousness of that failing, which makes us perhaps the slaves of the last argument, the captives of the last ingenious paradox or brilliant novelty, or else, silent and helpless and despairing under the stress of assertions which we know not how to contradict and reasonings which we cannot answer. We need to remember that time tries arguments as well as men, and is as truly an element in deep and sound conviction, as conscious and recognised and producible processes of thought. And yet, we need also to keep in order the fear of what is new, *because* it is new to us; the dislike of trouble,—and the greatest of all troubles to some people is the trouble of thinking,—when a serious demand is made on our fairness and attention. Again, in times of unsettlement and change and new departures, we are liable

according to our temperament, to be shaken in different ways. To one set of minds, the adventurous and the hazardous will always have an attraction of its own. Such minds will see special marks of truth in what is uncompromising and thorough-going and fearless of consequences. They like strong language and sweeping statements, and to feel that they are brave: and if the apparent moral loftiness of a view is combined with something of imaginative grandeur, the homely and prosaic testing of grounds and objections is impatiently put aside. And on the other hand, these new aspects, and these revolutions of ideas produce on other minds the effect of panic. The temptation comes to think that things threatened are lost; to think that because things are injured, they are utterly ruined. Men talk wildly and exaggerate danger, because they are frightened. Some years ago there appeared a work, which professed to be an elaborate demonstration that Supernatural Religion is in reason impossible, and historically false. Some of us may remember the alarm it produced. Serious men really spoke at the time as if it had made a new and bad breach in the defences of religion; as if Christians must look about them in earnest, if they were to save



anything from the storm ; as if the difficulty of believing and maintaining belief had been gravely and sensibly increased. A truer measure has since been taken of the book. Whatever its force may have been, the alarm was out of all proportion to it : but there *was* the alarm, and it was not worthy of wise and reasonable men. Surely, we may remember that, after all, be the strife of tongues what it may, there is as regards religion as well as morality a vast body of history behind us, of solid thought and conviction around us, unshaken and untouched by the novelties of ingenuity or the fashions of thought in the passing hour. In matters of inward thought and imagination, as well as in matters of desire and conduct, we have need of self-discipline. We need to take trouble to rule our spirits, to awaken our sluggishness, to question honestly and courageously the ideas that throng into our minds, to look with a steady eye on difficulties and risks, to resist the temptation of short cuts in argument, of hasty impulses in choice and conclusions ; to resist the temptation to go beyond reality—that reality of which our inward consciousness is witness—in what we say, in what we admire, in what we profess, in what we fear.

“Prune thou thy words, thy thoughts control  
 That o'er thee swell and throng:  
 They will condense within thy soul,  
 And turn to purpose strong.”

“The spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” are the words of the apostle. A poet has varied but not altered the combination—“Strength, and humility, and largeness of heart.”

“*Fortezza, ed umiltade, e largo core.*”<sup>1</sup>

I have ventured to speak to you of one of these great requisites for a clergyman's eventful work, the “sound mind,” which is the spirit and the fruit of self-discipline, and which is also the truest and most genuine form of manly and noble humility. For it implies the true acknowledgment to ourselves of our shortcomings and mistakes, and when they continue, as they so often do, the courage and the patience to bow ourselves to the task of self-correction. Of all the work that we do, the work with our own spirits and characters is to ourselves the hardest to judge of; with some of us, the most disappointing. But the reality of all our work—I do not say the outward success—must depend on the reality of this. And if we go on with it in faith

<sup>1</sup> Dante (?) Sonnet 55.

and honesty, surely it will not be in vain, even if less than we hoped for. For there is One whose Divine help is promised and pledged to us, if we are honest and true; One whose hand works in His own secret and wondrous way, Who is the source to men of insight, and wisdom, and counsel, and strength; the Holy Spirit and Comforter, to Whom we were solemnly committed at our Ordination. To His mighty power and guidance let us again commit ourselves. Confiding in His help, our fathers trained themselves to be the guides, the pastors, the comforters, of His flock and people. The task of conquering ourselves, of governing ourselves, may now seem to us, as doubtless it seemed to them in their day, "toilsome and incomplete." "Toilsome and incomplete" it seemed to them at the time, in the doing. But they now look back with other eyes on their efforts after self-discipline, from their place of rest. Let us pray the Holy Spirit of Truth, who helped them, to give us the single eye, the fearless heart, the dread of self-deceit, the love of what is real, the hatred and horror of what is showy and insincere. May He give us grace not to lose heart, to have patience with ourselves—and to draw from the necessity of having patience with ourselves an argument for

having patience with our brethren. "What a man cannot amend in himself or in others," says the great master of the honesties of self-discipline, the author of the *Imitation of Christ*—"he ought patiently to put up with, until God orders otherwise," and he adds—"If thou canst not make *thyself* that which thou wouldest be, how canst thou expect to have thy brother according to thy wish—

"Si non potes te talem facere qualem vis,

Quomodo poteris alium ad tuum habere bene placitum?"

(De Imit. i. 16.)

THE END.

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