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Theological Colleges :

Their AIM and SPIRIT.

ILLUSTRATED BY

TWO SERMONS

*Preached respectively, on the Vigil and the Festival of St. Peter,
1881, in connection with the Festival, and Opening of the
New Chapel, of the Salisbury Diocesan Theological
College :*

The one, in the College Chapel, by

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VICAR OF GREAT BUDWORTH, CHESHIRE :

(Lately the Principal of Salisbury Theological College.)

The other, in the Cathedral, by

THE REV. E. S. TALBOT, M.A.,

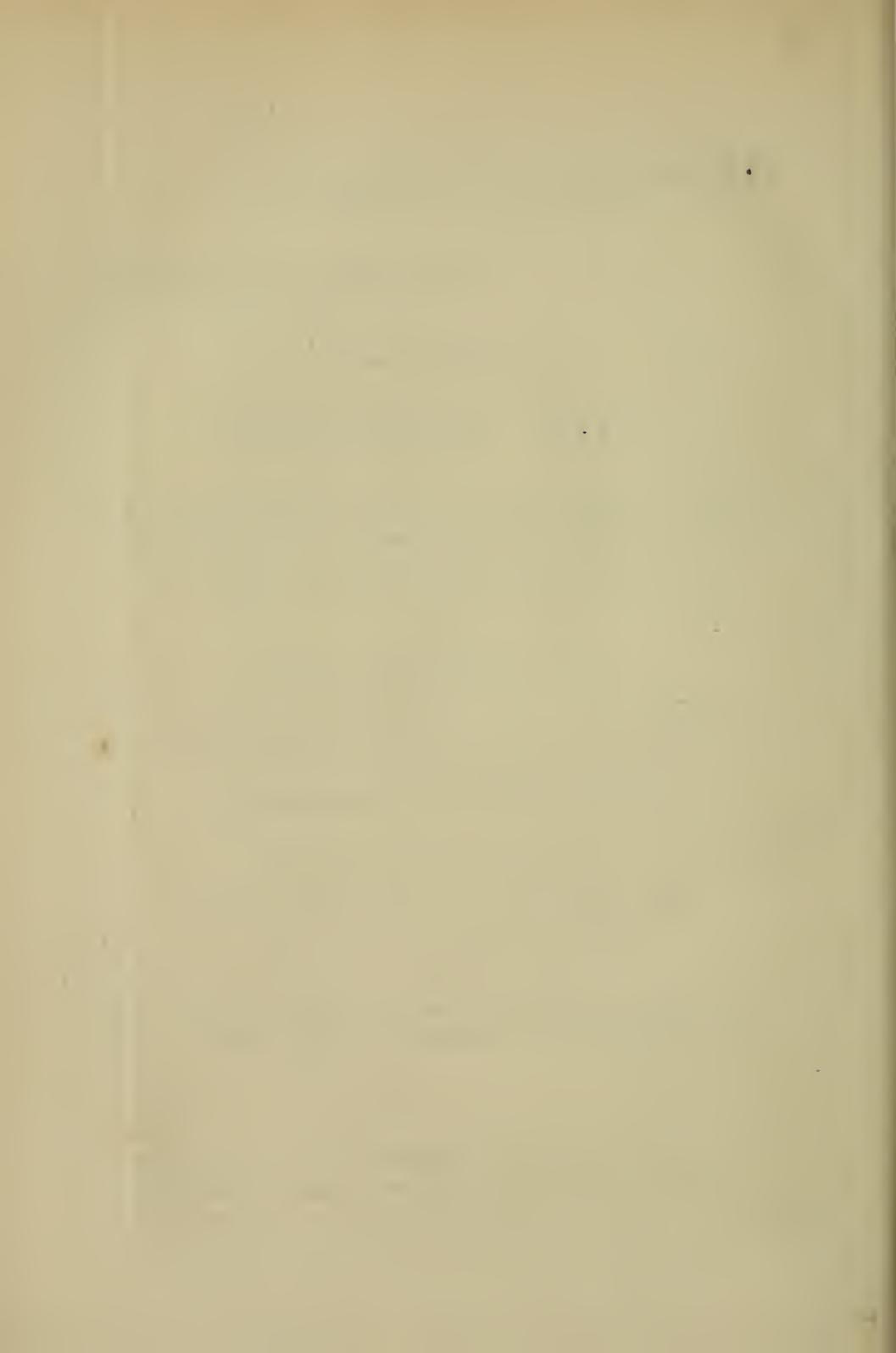
WARDEN OF KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

With Prefatory Remarks by the Rev. E. B. OTTLEY, M.A.,
Principal of the Salisbury Theological College.

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THE publication of the two Sermons preached in connection with the Festival of the Salisbury Theological College seems to call for some few remarks by way of preface. Though primarily addressed to those especially interested in the training of candidates for Holy Orders, it is believed that these sermons may be helpful to many others. For the Christian clergy, while in very truth they must be unworldly in a more exclusive sense than their lay brethren, are pledged only to the highest expression of a thought and life common to all Christians. The principles contended for, as essential in the solemn work of the Priesthood and of preparation for ordination, must find their realisation in some degree in the life of every loyal member of the great spiritual Priesthood of the Christian Body.

Again, it is hoped that the ideas which are dwelt upon in those sermons, indicating as they do, in some measure, the key note of the life and work of a Theological College, may help, both to remove misapprehensions that are known to exist, and to illustrate the great and increasing importance of such institutions in the organisation of the Church of the present day. "Our unhappy divisions" render, it would seem, inevitable the gradual secularisation of other educational instruments. Meanwhile the higher education of the masses demands with a fresh urgency a well-educated clergy: a clergy, not alone of general culture; but, above all, thoroughly and accurately trained in the science of Sacred Theology. However high be the estimation, in which the old Universities are held, as

laying the foundations of the highest education of the country; whatever value may be attached to the social training, and the intellectual outfit, which they provide; it is acknowledged that their general atmosphere is not one of unquestioned faith and religious sympathy, such as that, for which every earnest candidate for the Church's ministry must yearn. Even if a man should pass through Oxford or Cambridge unbiassed by directly negative and sceptical tides of thought, he cannot altogether escape the infection of the indifference and doubt of friends around him. The strenuous effort that may thus be needed to maintain his childhood's ardent faith may conceivably, in some cases and under ordinary circumstances, be beneficial and invigorating; but in presence of the awful, the never equalled responsibility, of the final and absolute adhesion to Christ implied in the ordination vow, a man has a moral claim to rest for a while within the shadow of the Church's Faith, to refresh and gird himself, in full communion of sympathy with others, who are prepared and resolved to make the same great choice in life. Exceptions of course there may be: and here and there, a man's faith may be, undoubtedly, not merely braced and strengthened, but quickened and intensified, by the very strain which tests and tries it. But such results cannot be represented as natural and normal: and, in the case of the majority of the undergraduates of our universities, the inevitable result of the discordances of belief and of moral theory must be to damp the ardour of their faith, and to dissipate the vigour of their enthusiasm. Neither the rarest, nor the least deplorable, phenomenon in the ranks of our younger clergy, is the man, who has taken Holy Orders as the matter-of-course sequel of his degree, without any profounder impulse than a general desire to be respectable and to do some good, and without having confronted and grappled with the doubts and diffi-

culties, that had been all along in the very air around him, sapping the strong certitude of his Christian convictions. Such an one may have suffered, rather than accepted, ordination in the hope, often, though not always, delusive, that he might see his way of escape from the phantoms of unbelief that had already overshadowed his soul. But distractions of work are no certain and ultimate cure of such spiritual sicknesses. His very conscience may rise up against him. He feels he has committed himself to an uncertain, and doubtful system. I forbear to depict the mental struggle, the agonies of soul, that too often have ensued under such conditions, or the wreck and ruin, perchance of one, possibly of multitudes, to whom he may feel constrained, though with terrible unwillingness, to minister.

Such cases, were they very rare, would suffice to justify the existence of a Theological College. Their frequency demonstrates its necessity. Perhaps the chief use of Theological Colleges is in providing men with an opportunity of testing and deepening their own convictions. The quiet and seclusion, once perhaps to be found at Oxford and Cambridge; the regularity of life; the community of aim and interests, of faith and life, silently known and recognised, as it can rarely be; the frequent services and sacraments; the aids to earnest study—these are the boons which a Theological College may super-add to the advantages of an University education. Few, who have enjoyed them, underestimate their value. Many have sad reason to regret that they never experienced them.

It will be observed that the primary function of the Theological College is thus conceived to be, not the independent training of those who, from one cause or another, are without the advantages of a University career; but the addition of a special training over and

above a general education. The main province of the Theological College is to *supplement* the education given at the Universities, not to be a substitute for it: to teach Theology, especially in its pastoral bearings, not Latin and Greek and Logic: to give a distinctive and particular bent to a man's education in view of the requirements of his profession. The lawyer, the soldier, the medical man are specially trained for their work. What should exclude the clerical profession from the need of an analogous preparation?

But undoubtedly, there are many persons who for various reasons are without an University degree, whose admission to Holy Orders is on every account to be encouraged. Lack of pecuniary means, failure of health, family difficulties, and other causes deprive many excellent men of the opportunity of an University career, or withdraw them from it prematurely. Others again—and they are increasingly numerous—are educated with the best success either privately, or in modern schools and colleges. The higher education of the country is no longer restricted to the Universities, and it may be questioned whether it would be well—even were it conceivably possible—that the Clergy should be recruited exclusively from them. But the Theological College, if it be advantageous to the University man, is all but indispensable in the case of other candidates for ordination. How else can security be found for moral character, and intellectual and spiritual capacity? In ordinary cases, might not a residence of at least two years at some Theological College be desirable, as a condition, under which alone a non-graduate might offer himself to the Bishop for ordination? There is no small danger, resulting in some measure from the multiplication of Theological Colleges, of men obtaining admission to the ranks of the clergy prematurely, unless those who

have the control of such institutions maintain a strict standard with regard to the residence of students.

The indebtedness of the Church of England to Theological Colleges is already great. They have contributed not a little to the efficiency of her clergy. Few will hesitate to admit that their work is not less but more needed now than heretofore. It is not too much to say that almost every religious body in this country, with any pretensions to careful organisation, is more scrupulous in the training and the testing of candidates for its ministry than is the Church of England generally. Meanwhile, however, a scientifically trained clergy is imperatively called for by the religious conditions of our country; a body, of course, of true, English-hearted men; not less large minded, because they believe intensely; none the less human, because they are God's Ministers. The on-look to the future work of the Church, though not without encouragements, is sufficiently anxious. On the one hand, 150 or 200 sects—Biblical Christians, professedly, most of them—bite and devour one another, with vehemence proportioned to the earnestness of their convictions. On the other, unbelieving Secularism, battenning upon schism, and too often sanctioning immorality, gains some ground among the people. To meet and grapple with these evils the shattered ranks of religious Englishmen are unable with any degree of success. And the ultimate remedy for our deplorable state of discord and division can be found only in stricter and faithfuller obedience to the One Truth that renders "free indeed." A strong, clear, positive Theology, true to historic Christianity, is essential to the re-union of English Christendom. And Theology must be studied under favourable conditions—of inward and spiritual quietness, and self-discipline, and absence of distracting bias, always and indispensably; and of outward peace

and freedom from the discordant clamour of the world, where circumstances allow. Moreover the absolute Christian principle that the 'pure in heart' enjoy the vision of God makes it incumbent upon us to touch the hem of Divine Truth with humility and reverence; and with hands, so far as may be, by God's grace cleansed from sin, and hearts prepared as for a sacrament. These considerations serve to define the scope and function of a Theological College; and the sermons which follow are their best emphasis and illustration.

E. B. O.

Theological College, Salisbury.
Autumn, 1881.

THE STERNNESS OF HOLY ENTERPRISE.

ACTS IV. 24—31.

“AND WHEN THEY HEARD THAT, THEY LIFTED UP THEIR VOICE TO GOD WITH ONE ACCORD, AND SAID, LORD, THOU ART GOD, WHICH HAST MADE HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS: WHO BY THE MOUTH OF THY SERVANT DAVID HAST SAID, WHY DID THE HEATHEN RAGE, AND THE PEOPLE IMAGINE VAIN THINGS? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH STOOD UP, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST. FOR OF A TRUTH AGAINST THY HOLY CHILD JESUS, WHOM THOU HAST ANOINTED, BOTH HEROD, AND PONTIUS PILATE, WITH THE GENTILES, AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE. AND NOW, LORD, BEHOLD THEIR THREATENINGS: AND GRANT UNTO THY SERVANTS, THAT WITH ALL BOLDNESS THEY MAY SPEAK THY WORD, BY STRETCHING FORTH THINE HAND TO HEAL; AND THAT SIGNS AND WONDERS MAY BE DONE BY THE NAME OF THY HOLY CHILD JESUS. AND WHEN THEY HAD PRAYED, THE PLACE WAS SHAKEN WHERE THEY WERE ASSEMBLED TOGETHER; AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND THEY SPAKE THE WORD OF GOD WITH BOLDNESS.”

I HAVE read you a most stirring word of history: true, without shadow of exaggeration; and pregnant with results beyond all imagining.

Our own life too is no play, but a reality. The present doing is real; and it shall be more real still in its future outgrowth. For the blossom, the fruit, are no merely consequential results; but are the highest unfolding and completeness of the realities of the seed sown.

Gathered as we are to-night for no purpose of fancy, but in the course of a work of most stirring life, let us think together of one or two chief characteristics of this primitive gathering of Christian men; think of them, that by thought and desire, breathed in prayer, we may win them to be characteristics of our own gathering.

Think, first, of their enthusiasm. What a strong spirit is here of eager confidence! What a force it gives to the men, not certainly of their own creating, not (as we should say) 'like themselves;' but what impetuous force, what a current of strong and purposeful spirit is here! Why is this? It is, for one thing, that these men have no doubt. A doubtful company is a divided company. A doubtful man is a man of two minds. And a man of two minds has neither foundation nor force: "ἄνθρωπος δίψυχος ἀκατάστατος." But there is no doubt here. That which they mean, they mean. They are absolutely sure of that on which they depend. Each man is in spirit one: and one spirit is in all. These are Christian men; and their faith in Christ is sure. Their faith is real. Christ is real. The work of Christ in their own life's work is real. The power of Christ, breathing in and round them, is real. Is not the very Spirit of Christ in men who are Christian? They are sure, then. Theirs is no timid on-look, hesitating, prudent, indefinite, unrelying. They are sure both of what they mean, and of the living meaning in what they do. They are sure, they are confident, they are united, they are enthusiastic.

Notice, secondly, what an enthusiasm of *action* this is. It is not the flashing imagination of the poet,

sympathetic, subtle, contemplative, and yet full, all the while, of rest; but is grim with the force of its eagerness to do and to bear. It is stern, it is fierce, in the vividness of its practical life,—in its resolute translation of faith into practice.

This translation of vivid faith into resolute action, this consecration of every force of body and mind to the one overmastering belief and desire,—does it ever fail to sweep obstacles before it with a strength of current that seems irresistible, that strikes wonder as well as awe into every generation of men whose eyes behold it? Even though the animating spirit be diverse (more or less widely) from the Spirit of Truth: who does not recognise at least the *strength* of a hearty fanaticism? Why were Cromwell's regiments so irresistible? Why did early Methodism sweep, like a flood, through the length and breadth of England?

There is an enthusiasm of words and ideas. It is sympathetic, it is artistic, it is full of delicacy. And there is an enthusiasm which is fiercely practical; which is keen, which is mighty, to endure, and to dare, and to do. The one lives much, and very delicately, in the memories of the past; the other lives for the present and the future, and lives sternly. The one is a natural strength of the fresh young time of nations, or ages, or faiths; the other is at once a beauty, and a danger, of systems which are venerable and refined.

When a nation, when a system, has in man's history and feeling grown fully mature; when its institutions have become venerable, its memories traditional, its sensibilities refined; how easy is it to put the imaginary

for the real enthusiasm: the enthusiasm of sympathetic feeling and idea for that which is *strong faith in resolute action!* How easy it is to decorate and re-decorate, to gild and to carve, the beautiful structures which we have inherited; and because we decorate, or because we appreciate, to take to our souls the credit of the structures themselves!

We in this place, in our Close, our Cloisters, our Cathedral, have an inheritance of beauty literally priceless. Think of it—its faultless beauty, its store of hallowed memories. And what is it, but the *very* choice blossom of seeds far off obscurely sown? Never, certainly, to the eyes of any of those to whose prayer or faith or work we owe it, half so beautiful, half so mystical, as it is to ours. And the visible beauty of this place, though a beautiful symbol, still is a symbol merely, of the manifold other and yet more priceless beauties which we inherit, as late-born in this Church of Christ in England.

Brethren, what am I saying? What is the thought I would set before you this night?

I have tried to carry you to the picture of a company of Christian men, gathered together in superhuman strength, in the early days of an enterprise, which, in its lowest aspect, was gigantic. I have hinted at a risk which may attend our own religious enthusiasms, in this favoured land where everything belonging to religion is venerable. I have been anxious that we should feel ourselves this night to be in the early stage of an enterprise as difficult and as holy as it is noble. The world is not ended; nor the struggle of it. The battle

with sin and the devil has still to be fought, as it had to be fought then. The men who were assembled together praying in that place which their strong faith shook, knew neither the greatness of the efforts before them, nor the greatness of their results. Only their whole resolute faith was bent forward to the work,—forward, as to a work which lay before them. Think of their faith, their resoluteness, their prayer. Think of its simplicity, and of its strength. No self-laudation in that; no self-consciousness, no satisfactory review of beautiful memories, no compliment, no resting from effort. And no magnificent imagination of beautiful results by-and-by to glory in. Only a stern, strong faith; a resolute united prayer; a compact marching forward, to dare and to do all. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.”

This College, I know well, is not too young to have memories of its own which are beautiful. Neither within the College itself, nor in its surroundings, nor in its memories, would I have anyone insensible to this fact of beauty. Nay its beauty of circumstance is to be, I firmly believe, one of the very precious factors of its life and discipline. And this Chapel is (I know it) as a crown of beauty to the College building. And this day is (I know it) as a day of consecration of its finished beauty.

And yet, the reality of this College and Chapel lies—in its future. The real character of this day is not an ending but a beginning. And oh! may it be a beginning indeed, not of ease or triumph or any self-

conscious beauty, but of effort, of resoluteness, of battle, of ultimate conquest, such as must tax, and overtax, all strength that is human. Forgive me if I am even jealous this day of all words of compliment, looking far rather to the greatness and dignity of the future task, than to the satisfaction of what is past. If there be severity in beginnings, it is not unmeet. Nay, if there even be sacrifice, if there even be tears,—are they not all hallowed, by express word? “They that sow *in tears* shall reap in joy.”

The struggle that is still before the Church and its ministers; the task of due preparation of ministers for that struggle; what reality of most earnest beginnings, what simplicity, what fervour, what strength, both of faith and of prayer, do these need?

Bear with me, then, brethren, if (suddenly called to speak to you this evening) I have been led, in no spirit (I believe) of timidity or doubt, but in craving for realities of strength and in dread of unreality, to plead, even strangely, for severity—hopeful severity, indeed, confident severity, aye even joyful severity, yet severity—rather than simply jubilation; rather for the hymns of soldiers in the camp, who prepare for battle on the morrow, than for the triumph-music of the “*Te Deum*.”

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN RELATION TO CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

ACTS IV. 20.

“ WE CANNOT BUT SPEAK THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SEEN
AND HEARD.”

THE words may be taken to represent the impulse and the secret of all genuine teaching. We must speak that we do know : we must feel, if we are to make others feel. How eagerly we all listen to an eye-witness's account ! how readily he communicates to us the feelings which he himself experienced at the moment of the action ! Of such sort, we may venture to say, was the claim of the Divine Teacher—“ We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” And the preachers who first made the world feel the power of the Gospel were those who had “ accompanied together all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among” them ; and who as eye-witnesses of His majesty could speak of “ that which they had seen with their eyes and their hands had handled of the Word of Life.” The law is one with which we must comply, if we are to impart to others that which has been given to us. How then do the things of Christian Faith become to us ‘the things which we have seen and heard’ ? It is a question which touches directly us the clergy ; as directly and with even more concentration of interest those who are just preparing to enter on the clerical vocation ; but most truly also it touches all Christian people, inasmuch as for

each it is of the very essence of the Christian life to give as well as to receive, to thrive by watering others.

Let us dwell therefore a little upon it. The realization of what we believe comes, we should all say, in two main ways: by inward concentration upon it, and by outward exercise of it: by contemplation, and by action. First—by action. We cannot fully prepare for action except by acting: there is no armour so good, but we must needs prove it and learn its use: in the stress of our strife with sin, in the midst of our own efforts to minister to the perplexities or needs or sins of others we realise, as we had not before, and could not otherwise, the power, aye and the meaning of our Faith. It is thus that every minister of Christ will bear witness that he knows not whether his ministry has helped his own inward life more, or his own inward life his ministry. Certainly he will also witness that the best of what he ministers, he has learnt in ministering. And I suppose that the law, “He giveth grace unto the humble,” is never more surely and beautifully proved than by the priest to whom God gives the grace to keep through all his teaching an ear attentive and a heart ready to be taught: to catch the words of God which come to him through the patient, and the simple, and the poor.

But yet in the nature of the case it cannot be thus, as a rule, that our apprehension of truth begins. There must be in us something upon which experience can act: instincts which it can elicit: perceptions which it can quicken: truths which it can illustrate: convictions which it can confirm or modify or enlarge. There is

indeed no prescribing the ways in which wisdom enters ; and sometimes it is by an instance that a principle is first revealed or a truth is first learnt through a character : or the Divineness of Love is realized through a human affection : while always the inward and outward teaching interlace and interact. Yet the natural order, as we say, is that the inward realization should come first. "Whosoever hath to him shall be given."

And for this inward realization there must be time, and quietness, and care. We must learn what we are afterwards to use : we must assimilate what we are then to administer. Contemplation is essential to action. The thing is obvious, it needs no proof, and yet it is a truth which the facts and habits of our busy age, and the theories which those habits generate for their own justification, tend continually to disparage and oppose. Is there, it is asked, time for this standing aloof to think and meditate ? The world's needs are too pressing ; the strife is too sore ; we cannot spare a man ; we cannot polish our weapons : we must take them as they come to our hand. And the thought of our Lord's own words may come up to reinforce this : how He blamed the wrapping up of the talent, and to the laying out of it gave, not only praise, but promise of its multiplication. And then reason is called upon to justify what necessity is thought to dictate, and we talk sagaciously of the danger of being self-absorbed and morbid ; of reactions after times of thought and aspiration ; of the healthiness of a life in which action and contemplation blend : or going even further, we remind ourselves that

Love is higher than knowledge, and that service is the exercise of Love, and therefore we persuade ourselves that service is better than contemplation.

And so if we ask those who are clergy to stipulate with themselves, either in the order of their year or in the time-table of their day, for times of special devotion or study; if we ask those who are approaching the Holy Ministry to draw aside for a while from the activities of work and charity for reading and meditation and prayer, to speak with God and listen for His Voice, if we remind the layman that in the bustle of the world's course he *cannot* realize the solemn awe and beauty of the things that are not seen, and beg him now and then to withdraw himself, either alone among the things of nature, or with others in Retreats of prayer and thought, we are met at once by disinclinations of temperament and habit, and by half-truths made into objections.

How shall we justify ourselves? In this way at least for one; let us recal the limited capacity of our natures. Every way we learn it more and more as we go on through life. We crave for infinity of knowledge, and we find that we can only learn a little of a few of its departments; we feel that we could love boundlessly, yet the sympathy of which we practically dispose is cribbed and confined by other thoughts and interests which compete with it for space within us; we long for harmony and unity of truth, and we have to recognize that for us the highest truth often lies in a seeming contradiction of two truths.

But it is only another detail of the same fact that we

have to learn by degrees, and to enter separately and successively into, the most various feelings. It is the dream of pride, or shallowness, or sloth, that we can be and feel and see at once all that is given even to us to be and feel and see. Each side of life, each kind of feeling, each interest of knowledge and sympathy, in proportion as we really entertain it, fills, as we say, our hearts, occupies us with a certain disproportion. The recollection that it is so is a most blessed help against the snare of pride, as we dwell on our skill or zeal for the subject of the moment. But through the change of moods and thoughts there runs, or should run, a unity—the unity of our own character, the unity of God's grace, the unity of our own recollectedness. And through such one-sided experience and disproportionate visions we are being schooled in spiritual perspective; and growing towards such inward wholeness, blent of many living parts, as may be permitted to us here. May we venture, brethren, to point out that to this, as to a most inevitable condition of human life, our Divine Lord condescended. To Him we might have thought—nay in some sense we may be sure—Truth was ever visible entire and in all its unity; and the perspectives of Divine Truth and of Human Life presented themselves continually aright. And yet who will deny that it was His will to experience with us, and for us, different *experiences* (as we call them) severally and successively, and allow them in turn to absorb and occupy His Soul: the joy of the Transfiguration and the anguish of Gethsemane; the confidence of the “I know that Thou hearest me always,” and the

desolation of the great Forsaking on the Cross; the indignant denunciation of the Pharisees, and the tears shed over the city which they led? Are not these as truly changes and sequences of feeling in the Divine Life as any that are in ours—‘yet without sin;’ without loss of self-mastery, and an underlying unity of life; and if we know that He “grew” and that He “learned,” may we not be sure that each of these enriched His Divine Humanity, with the added power which only an intense and concentrated emotion can give?

And so I would ask, is not this insistence that we must always be active, that there are dangers in all self-tending, simply one more mistake added to the many that are made by trying to overpass the conditions of our present life: by trying to be as God when we are but men; by trying prematurely to blend what must first be learnt and realized in detail and in parts?

Is it not truer and better to acknowledge that we are not yet fitted for the life in which action and contemplation blend; that we must work indeed towards it, as we acknowledge when we say, “Laborare est Orare:” or “They also serve who only stand and wait;” but that the penetration of life with prayer and the sense of God’s presence, and the abiding consciousness in the world of truths and standards which are “not of the world” can only come by the help of times and seasons when those thoughts are allowed to possess us, and action is suspended that they may do so?

Brethren, you will need perhaps to justify to yourselves and to others in some such way as this the life of

a place like the College for which we pray to-day. You will need sometimes even to justify the assumption that there is need of special study and learning before the Ministry is undertaken. But where this is admitted you may still have to justify the other assumption, that after the education of the boy and youth, and before his ministry, a time is needed when in devotion, and thought, and self-scrutiny, he should prepare himself for his work. I do not mean by this, as you know very well, a time of absorption in spiritual reveries and day dreams. I do mean indeed the fixing of the inward eye upon Him whom we believe and upon the things which He has shown to us about Himself, with an eager effort really to see them; but I mean also the active work of the reason comparing and combining them and working out their results; I mean also that severer part of the devotional life when the Truths and the Laws of God are allowed to search out our souls and past lives, and make known to us our sins; and I mean the training of ourselves in those practical habits of devotion, through which we seek and obtain the "daily bread" of our life in Christ.

For these things (you will urge) the life of a Theological College holds out to many men an opportunity of inestimable value: and you will not shrink from saying that for many at least it is better in a place like this, and under the shadow of this great Cathedral, with its associations of quietness and solemn devotion, than amid the many calls and opportunities of immediate action which the presence of a large town supplies. For men differ, and if some need to be roused to

spiritual reality and quickened with the fire of charity by the sight of human life in its crowded masses with their bitter miseries and their rampant sins, for others it is better that for a time they should be saved from the distractions of outward things and allowed to centre themselves upon the Truth, and upon its relation to them and to their brethren.

But in such defence of a Theological College like this, you will maintain a principle of which it is only one special application: the principle that the inward part of our spiritual life is an integral part of it, and must be recognized and provided for as such.

Evidently if it is so necessary to tend it before Ordination it is necessary also in the strain or the monotony of the practical work of the ordained: evidently if it is so necessary for the clerical life, this is a matter in which the clerical and the lay life differ not in kind but in degree. The lay people, men or women, have their ministries of which devotion must be the spring: they have their dangers of absorption in earthly things: they need their opportunities of self-recollection. How many parents would manage their home better, if from time to time going aside for a day or two they were to try in prayer and thought to review its difficulties and needs, the characters for example of their children, and the way in which they are handling them, or to realise afresh some principle or precept of Christian life, that they may carry back a clearer or more specific influence of it into their daily lives. How many new beginnings in life would be better made, and new stages in it better entered, if first there was a pause, to look for God's

will and to conceive and dedicate a purpose of executing it. How much of the vague restlessness or uneasiness of many would disappear if there were a time or times in the twenty-four hours when they gathered up and possessed their souls, and for a moment in GOD'S solemn presence faced the duties or the temptations and dangers which we spend our time so often in trying to blink and to forget. How many little faults are removed, how many little opportunities of service, and of charity are discerned by those who spare time habitually to cast a quiet glance upon some feature of the Divine Ideal, as it is seen in the words or the example of the Master, or reflected in the lives of His servants.

Do not be afraid, then, to contend for this principle, to assert it, modestly and with no spiritual Pharisaism, but firmly and unyieldingly. It is one of the matters in which, if the Church is true and strong, she will be justified by the voice of human nature; by something of a paradox men will recognise at once that she has a supernatural thing for which she cries "room" in the midst of the crowd of worldly things; and also that she is defending what, on merely natural grounds, they ought to defend; for science and art and poetry and philosophy agree that the work which has power in the world is fed by the hours of solitary and concentrated thought. And, conversely, these, if the Church neglects her part, will taunt her that she has sounded less deeply, and declared less truly than themselves, the seriousness of human life and work. They will say, with terrible justice, that with all her opportunities she

has failed to warn the modern world of its weakness, and to minister to its want—the weakness and the want of a generation which is too busy for pause, and by losing concentration loses depth.

Yes; we must maintain the value of that part of religious life of which I have been speaking this morning, not less, but more, carefully because it is against many of the prevailing tendencies of the time. That it is so, and is on that account commonly depreciated, is in truth the proof of the degree to which we need it. Now, as always, “we praise the virtues we’re inclined to, and damn the vices we’ve no mind to.” Our continual praise of activity may warn us that our danger is of another kind: our keen detection of the mischiefs of religious inwardness may suggest that we need have no special fear of making a mistake in that direction ourselves.

And yet are the busy activity of our time, and the absorbing and fiercely serious nature of its practical problems to be put down all as loss; all as hostile concentration to our true spiritual life, and to be met by the antidotes of retirement and devotion? Or may it be given to our generation, if we see our true call, to draw action and contemplation nearer together? In spite of all that needs to be done, all that cries for help, we claim time for retirement, for silence, for meditation and prayer. Yes; in spite of it, but not in forgetfulness of it. We go aside from them for a little space; but it is not to forsake the world, our brethren’s world; it is for their sake, and that we may minister to them the better. As we meditate and pray, those great needs,

and great sufferings, and terrible enigmas of the world outside our doors, haunt us like presences moulding and colouring our thoughts. And under that influence may not our religious thinking, if it is perhaps less deep and certainly less systematic than that of former times, become nevertheless more real, our perception of the central purpose of God's redeeming work more keen? may we not appreciate more deeply the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's love and man's sin, of the curse and the blessing of sorrow? Already perhaps there are signs that this is so; that the thought of faithful men in the present day is like the thought of a serious and solemn crisis, of those who in all their thinking have upon them the sense of a great responsibility; who earnestly desire to have bread, and not a stone, to offer, in Christ's name, to a world's hunger; and to prove once more against new doubts, and among new circumstances, that in the Gospel of the Incarnation are hid the treasures of wisdom, and love, and healing which the world needs.

Alone with God in solemn silence: and yet quick with human sympathy for the surging human life around us; each of the two great loves, the love of God and the love of man, quickening thus our sensibility for the other; may this be the quality of our inward lives, of our secret devotion! and in particular may God give to the life and thought of your Theological College something of this twofold and blended grace!

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