

KNOTS UNTIED

BEING

PLAIN STATEMENTS ON DISPUTED POINTS IN RELIGION,

FROM THE

STANDPOINT OF AN EVANGELICAL CHURCHMAN.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE volume now in the readers hands requires a few words of explanation. It consists of eighteen papers on subjects which are matters of dispute among English Churchmen in the present day, systematically arranged. A moment's glance at the table of contents will show that there is hardly any point of theological controversy belonging to this era which is not discussed, with more or less fulness, in these papers.

The doctrinal tone of the volume will be found distinctly and decidedly "Evangelical." I avow that, without hesitation, at the outset. The opinions expressed and advocated about the matters discussed, are those of an Evangelical Churchman. What THAT means every intelligent Englishman knows, and it is mere affectation to profess ignorance about the point. They are not popular opinions, I am aware, and are only held, perhaps, by a minority of the English clergy. But they are the only opinions which I can find in Holy Scripture, in the Thirty-nine Articles, in the Prayer-book fairly interpreted, in the works of the Reformers, or in the writings of the pre-Caroline divines. In the faith of these opinions I have lived for thirty-five years, and have seen no reason to be ashamed of them, however rudely they may have been assailed.

The object of sending forth this volume is to meet the wants of those who may wish to see theological questions fully discussed and examined from an "Evangelical" standpoint, and complain that they cannot find a book that does this. There are hundreds of English Churchmen who will never look at a tract (though St. Paul's Epistles, when first sent forth, were only tracts), but are willing to read a volume. To them I offer this volume, and respectfully invite their attention to its contents. If it does nothing else, I hope it may convince some readers that in the controversies of this day the reasonings and arguments are not all on one side.

The friendly readers of the many popular tracts, which God has

enabled me to write in the last twenty-five years, will not find in this volume much that is new to them. They will find some of their old acquaintances, but altered, remodelled, recast, and partially divested of their direct and familiar style. But they will find the same arguments, the same matter, and the same substance, though presented in a new form, and adapted to the tastes of a different order of minds. I am sure they will agree with me, that it is well to use every means of doing good, and if possible to meet the wants of every class of readers.

Whether the volume will do any good remains to be seen. At any rate it is an honest effort to untie some theological knots, and to supply some clear statements of truth from the standpoint of an Evangelical Churchman. That God may bless the effort, and make it useful to the cause of Christ and to the Church of England, is my earnest prayer.

J. C. RYLE.

Stradbroke Vicarage,

May, 1874.

PREFACE TO THE TENTH EDITION.

IN sending forth a tenth edition of this volume, I do not think it necessary to add anything to the original preface which I drew up when it first appeared.

The general principles which I asserted and maintained when I was much younger than I am now, I firmly assert and maintain in 1885. I find nothing to retract, cancel, or withdraw in the nineteen papers which compose the volume.

I frankly admit, after careful examination of "Knots Untied," that I observe in its pages occasional sharp and strong expressions which perhaps I should not use if I wrote the book over again in the present year. But I think it better to make no change, and to leave the original language alone. I wish my readers to understand that the views which I hold as a presbyter I still hold as a bishop; and I fear that any alteration might lead to misconstruction and misrepresentation.

That God may continue to bless the book and make it useful is my earnest prayer.

J. C. LIVERPOOL.

PALACE, LIVERPOOL,
February 9, 1885.

KNOTS UNTIED.

I.

EVANGELICAL RELIGION.

IT may be laid down as a rule, with tolerable confidence, that the absence of accurate definitions is the very life of religious controversy. If men would only define with precision the theological terms which they use, many disputes would die. Scores of excited disputants would discover that they do not really differ, and that their disputes have arisen from not explaining the meaning of words.

In opening the subject of this paper, I desire to remember carefully this important rule. Without further preface, I shall begin by explaining what I mean when I speak of “Evangelical Religion.”

By “Evangelical Religion,” I do not mean Christianity as compared with Heathenism, or Protestantism as compared with Romanism, or Trinitarianism as compared with Socinianism or Deism. I do not propose to argue with the Sceptic or the Neologian, with the Papist or the Jew. What I do want to consider is the religion which is peculiar to that party in the Church of England commonly called “Evangelical.” To that point I shall confine myself, and to that alone.

I will not waste time by proving the existence of such a party as “the Evangelical party.” It is a fact as patent as the sun in heaven. When it began first to be called by this name, and why it was so called, are points into which it is not worth while now to inquire. It is a simple fact that it exists. Whether we like it or not, whether it be right or wrong, the well-known tripartite division is correct and may be assumed as true. There are three great schools of thought in the Church of England, High Church, Broad Church, and Evangelical;—and the man who cannot see them is in a very curious state of mind.* Now what are the distinctive peculiarities of the religion of the Evangelical school? That it has some leading tenets or principles is unmistakable and undeniable. What are those principles which distinguish it from other schools? This in plain words is my subject,—Has Evangelical Religion any distinctive principles? I answer, it has.—Are they worth contending for? I answer, they are.

* Beneath this tripartite division there are, no doubt, many sub-divisions, and subordinate shades of difference. There is certainly a very distinct line of demarcation between the old High Church party and the modern Ritualistic section of the Church of England. The famous pamphlet entitled “Quousque” is a striking proof of this.

I approach the subject with a deep sense of its difficulty. It cannot be handled without touching points of extreme nicety, and treading on very delicate ground. It necessitates comparison between section and section of our Church; and all comparisons are odious. It lays a writer open to the charge of being “party-spirited, narrow-minded, combative, pugnacious,” and what not. But there are times when comparisons are a positive duty. It is an apostolic command to “try things that differ.” (Phil. i. 10.) The existence of diversities in the Church of England is a fact that cannot be ignored. To pretend that we do not see them is absurd. Everybody else can see them, talk about them, and criticise them. To attempt to deny their existence is mere squeamishness and affectation. Whether we like it or not, there they are, and the world around us knows it.

But while I have a deep sense of the difficulty of the subject, I have a deeper sense of its importance. The clouds are gathering round the Church of England; her very existence is in peril. Conflicting opinions bid fair to rend her in twain. A strife has arisen within her pale in the last few years, not about the trappings and vestments of religion, but about the very foundations of the Gospel. It remains to be seen whether our beloved Church will survive the struggle. Surely it is high time for Evangelical clergymen and laymen to review calmly their position, and to consider seriously what it is they have got to maintain and defend. Let us walk round our lines. Let us mark well our bulwarks. Let us clearly see the Malakhoffs and Redans that we have to man. Let us distinctly understand the principles which are characteristic of our body. It must do us good; it can do us no harm.

In defining what Evangelical Religion is, I admit at the outset that I have no written creed, no formal declaration of principles, to refer to. The reader will do me the justice to believe that I feel that want very keenly. I can only bring forward the results of such reading, study, and observation, as are within the reach of all ordinary men. But during the last ten years I have examined carefully the published works of most of the Fathers of the Evangelical school, and especially of the men of the last century, and I have formed decided opinions about their peculiar principles. I may be wrong in my estimate of their merits; but I can honestly say that I have not arrived at my conclusions without prayer, thought, and pains.*

* Of course my readers will understand that, throughout this paper, I am only expressing my own individual opinion. I do not for a moment pretend to be a mouthpiece of the Evangelical party, or to speak for anybody but myself. Indeed I am not sure that all who are called Evangelical will agree with all that this paper contains. I am only describing what I, personally, believe to be the leading sentiments of most Evangelical churchmen, and my description must be taken for what it is worth.

There are three questions which I wish to bring under the notice of the readers of this paper.

- I. What Evangelical religion is.
- II. What it is not.
- III. What makes much religion not Evangelical.

Each of these questions I shall attempt to touch very briefly.

I. To the question "*what Evangelical Religion is?*" the simplest answer I can give is to point out what appear to be its leading features. These I consider to be five in number.

(a) The first leading feature in Evangelical Religion is the *absolute supremacy it assigns to Holy Scripture*, as the only rule of faith and practice, the only test of truth, the only judge of controversy.

Its theory is that man is required to believe nothing, as necessary to salvation, which is not read in God's Word written, or can be proved thereby. It totally denies that there is any other guide for man's soul, co-equal or coordinate with the Bible. It refuses to listen to such arguments, as "the Church says so,"—"the Fathers say so,"—"primitive antiquity says so,"—"Catholic tradition says so,"—"the Councils say so,"—"the ancient liturgies say so,"—"the Prayer-book says so,"—"the universal conscience of mankind says so,"—"the verifying light within says so,"—unless it can be shown that what is said is in harmony with Scripture.

The supreme authority of the Bible, in one word, is one of the corner-stones of our system. Show us anything plainly written in that Book, and, however trying to flesh and blood, we will receive it, believe it, and submit to it. Show us anything, as religion, which is contrary to that Book, and, however specious, plausible, beautiful, and apparently desirable, we will not have it at any price. It may come before us endorsed by Fathers, schoolmen, and catholic writers;—it may be commended by reason, philosophy, science, the inner light, the verifying faculty, the universal conscience of mankind. It signifies nothing. Give us rather a few plain texts. If the thing is not in the Bible, deducible from the Bible, or in manifest harmony with the Bible, we will have none of it. Like the forbidden fruit, we dare not touch it, lest we die. Our faith can find no resting-place except in the Bible, or in Bible arguments. Here is rock: all else is sand.

(b) The second leading feature in Evangelical Religion is *the depth and prominence it assigns to the doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption*.

Its theory is that in consequence of Adam's fall, all men are as far

as possible gone from original righteousness, and are of their own natures inclined to evil. They are not only in a miserable, pitiable, and bankrupt condition, but in a state of guilt, imminent danger, and condemnation before God. They are not only at enmity with their Maker, and have no title to heaven, but they have no will to serve their Maker, no love to their Maker, and no meetness for heaven.

We hold that a mighty spiritual disease like this requires a mighty spiritual medicine for its cure. We dread giving the slightest countenance to any religious system of dealing with man's soul, which even *seems* to encourage the notion that his deadly wound can be easily healed. We dread fostering man's favourite notion that a little church-going and sacrament-receiving,—a little patching, and mending, and whitewashing, and gilding, and polishing, and varnishing, and painting the outside,—is all that his case requires. Hence we protest with all our heart against formalism, sacramentalism, and every species of mere external or vicarious Christianity. We maintain that all such religion is founded on an inadequate view of man's spiritual need. It requires far more than this to save, or satisfy, or sanctify, a soul. It requires nothing less than the blood of God the Son applied to the conscience, and the grace of God the Holy Ghost entirely renewing the heart. Man is radically diseased, and man needs a radical cure. I believe that ignorance of the extent of the fall, and of the whole doctrine of original sin, is one grand reason why many can neither understand, appreciate, nor receive Evangelical religion. Next to the Bible, as its foundation, it is based on a clear view of original sin.

(c) The third leading feature of Evangelical Religion is the *paramount importance it attaches to the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and to the nature of the salvation which He has wrought out for man.

Its theory is that the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, has by His life, death, and resurrection, as our Representative and Substitute, obtained a complete salvation for sinners, and a redemption from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin, and that all who believe on Him are, even while they live, completely forgiven and justified from all things,—are reckoned completely righteous before God,—are interested in Christ and all His benefits.

We hold that nothing whatever is needed between the soul of man the sinner and Christ the Saviour, but simple, childlike faith, and that all means, helps, ministers, and ordinances are useful just so far as they help this faith, but no further;—but that rested in and relied on as ends and not as means, they become downright poison to the soul.

We hold that an experimental knowledge of Christ crucified and interceding, is the very essence of Christianity, and that in teaching

men the Christian religion we can never dwell too much on Christ Himself, and can never speak too strongly of the fulness, freeness, presentness, and simplicity of the salvation there is in Him for every one that believes.

Not least, we hold most firmly that the true doctrine about Christ is precisely that which the natural heart most dislikes. The religion which man craves after is one of sight and sense, and not of faith. An external religion, of which the essence is “doing something,”—and not an inward and spiritual one, of which the essence is “believing,”—this is the religion that man naturally loves. Hence we maintain that people ought to be continually warned not to make a Christ of the Church, or of the ministry, or of the forms of worship, or of baptism, or of the Lord’s Supper. We say that life eternal is to know Christ, believe in Christ, abide in Christ, have daily heart communion with Christ, by simple personal faith,—and that everything in religion is useful so far as it helps forward that life of faith, but no further.

(d) The fourth leading feature in Evangelical Religion is the *high place which it assigns to the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man.*

Its theory is that the root and foundation of all vital Christianity in any one, is a work of grace in the heart, and that until there is real experimental business within a man, his religion is a mere husk, and shell, and name, and form, and can neither comfort nor save. We maintain that the things which need most to be pressed on men’s attention are those mighty works of the Holy Spirit, inward repentance, inward faith, inward hope, inward hatred of sin, and inward love to God’s law. And we say that to tell men to take comfort in their baptism or Church membership, when these all-important graces are unknown, is not merely a mistake, but positive cruelty.

We hold that, as an inward work of the Holy Ghost is a necessary thing to a man’s salvation, so also it is a thing that must be inwardly *felt*. We admit that feelings are often deceptive, and that a man may feel much, or weep much, or rejoice much, and yet remain dead in trespasses and sins. But we maintain firmly that there can be no real conversion to God, no new creation in Christ, no new birth of the Spirit, where there is nothing felt and experienced within. We hold that the witness of the Spirit, however much it may be abused, is a real, true thing. We deem it a solemn duty to be no less jealous about the work of the Holy Ghost, in its place and degree, than we are about the work of Christ. And we insist that where there is nothing *felt* within the heart of a man, there is nothing really possessed.

(e) The fifth and last leading feature in Evangelical Religion is *the importance which it attaches to the outward and visible work of the*

Holy Ghost in the life of man.

Its theory is that the true grace of God is a thing that will always make itself manifest in the conduct, behaviour, tastes, ways, choices, and habits of him who has it. It is not a *dormant* thing, that can be within a man and not show itself without. The heavenly seed is “not corruptible, but incorruptible.” It is a seed which is distinctly said to “remain” in every one that is born of God. (1 Peter i. 23; 1 John iii. 9.) Where the Spirit is, He will always make His presence known.

We hold that it is wrong to tell men that they are “children of God, and members of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven,” unless they really overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. We maintain that to tell a man he is “born of God,” or regenerated, while he is living in carelessness or sin, is a dangerous delusion, and calculated to do infinite mischief to his soul. We affirm confidently that “fruit” is the only certain evidence of a man’s spiritual condition; that if we would know whose he is and whom he serves, we must look first at his life. Where there is the grace of the Spirit there will be always more or less fruit of the Spirit. Grace that cannot be seen is no grace at all, and nothing better than Antinomianism. In short, we believe that where there is nothing seen, there is nothing possessed.

Such are the leading features of Evangelical Religion. Such are the main principles which characterize the teaching of the Evangelical school in the Church of England. To my eyes they seem to stand out in the theological horizon like Tabor and Hermon among the mountains, and to tower upward like cathedral spires in our English plains. It will readily be perceived that I have only sketched them in outline. I have purposely avoided much that might have been said in the way of amplification and demonstration. I have omitted many things which might have been handled as parts and portions of our system, not because they are not important, but because they are comparatively of secondary importance. But enough has probably been said to serve my present purpose. I have pointed out what I conscientiously believe are the five distinctive doctrinal marks by which the members of the Evangelical body may be discerned. Rightly or wrongly, I have laid them down plainly. I venture to think that my statement will hold water and stand the fire.

I do not for a moment deny, be it remembered, that many Churchmen who are outside the Evangelical body, are sound in the main about the five points I have named, if you take them one by one. Propound them separately, as points to be believed, and they would admit them every one. But they do not give them the prominence, position, rank, degree, priority, dignity, and precedence which we do. And this I hold to be a most important difference between us and

them. It is the *position* which we assign to these points, which is one of the grand characteristics of Evangelical theology. We say boldly that they are first, foremost, chief, and principal things in Christianity, and that want of attention to their position mars and spoils the teaching of many well-meaning Churchmen.

To show all the foundations on which Evangelical Religion is based, would be clearly impossible in a paper like this. We appeal boldly to the Holy Scriptures, and challenge any one to examine our system by the light of the New Testament.—We appeal boldly to the Thirty-nine Articles of our own Church, and assert unhesitatingly that they are on our side.—We appeal boldly to the writings of our leading Divines, from the Reformation down to the time of Archbishop Laud, and invite any man to compare our teaching with theirs.—We repudiate with scorn the vulgar charge of novelty, and tell the man who makes it that he only exposes his own ignorance. We ask him to turn again to his New Testament, to study afresh the Thirty-nine Articles, to take down and read once more the English theology of the pre-Caroline age. We court the fullest, strictest investigation into our case, and shall abide the result without fear. Of ourselves and our imperfections we may well be ashamed; but of what is called “Evangelical Religion” we have no cause to be ashamed at all. Let men say what they please. Nothing is easier than to call names, affix odious epithets, and frighten ignorant people, by raising the cry of “Calvinism” against the Evangelical school. “The curse causeless shall not come.” (Prov. xxvi. 2.) I believe firmly that impartial inquiry will always show that Evangelical Religion is the religion of Scripture and of the Church of England.

II. I turn now to the negative side of my subject. Having shown what Evangelical Religion is, it becomes my duty next to show *what it is not*.

I am almost ashamed to take up time by saying anything on this point. But slanders and false reports about Evangelical Religion are so sadly numerous, and shameless misrepresentations of its nature are so widely current, that I can hardly pass over this branch of my subject. We are not perfect, we know to our sorrow. We have many faults and defects, we humbly confess. But to many charges brought against us we plead “Not guilty.” We say they are not true.

(1) I begin then by saying that Evangelical Religion *does not despise learning*, research, or the wisdom of days gone by. It is not true to say that we do. In thorough appreciation of anything that throws light on God’s Word, we give place to none. Let any one look over the lists of those who in days gone by have been eminent for theolog-

ical scholarship in this country, and I am bold to say he will find some of the most eminent are Evangelical men. Ridley, Jewell, Usher, Lightfoot, Davenant, Hall, Whittaker, Willett, Reynolds, Leighton, Owen, Baxter, Manton, are names that for profound learning stand second to none. To what school do they belong, I should like to know, if not to the Evangelical? What school, I ask confidently, has done more for the exposition and interpretation of Scripture than the Evangelical school? What school has given to the world more Commentaries? Poole's *Synopsis* and Owen on *Hebrews* are alone sufficient to show that Evangelical men do read and can think. Even in the Egyptian darkness of last century, there were few English divines who showed more real learning than Hervey, Romaine, and Toplady.

Turn even to our own day, and I say, unhesitatingly, that we have no cause to be ashamed. To name divines of our own generation is somewhat invidious. Yet I do not shrink from saying that the three great books of Dean Goode on *Scripture*, *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, remain to the present day unanswered by the opponents of the Evangelical school. Coarse sneers about ignorance and shallowness may be safely disregarded, while books like these are unrefuted.

But while we do not despise learning, we steadily refuse to place any uninspired writings on a level with revelation. We refuse to call any man "father" or "master," however learned or intellectual he may be. We will follow no guide but Scripture. We own no master over conscience in religious matters, except the Bible. We leave it to others to talk of "primitive antiquity" and "Catholic truth." To us there is but one test of truth: "What is written in the Scripture? What saith the Lord?"

(2) I go on to say that Evangelical Religion *does not undervalue the Church*, or think lightly of its privileges. It is not true to say that we do. In sincere and loyal attachment to the Church of England we give place to none. We value its form of government, its Confession of faith, its mode of worship, as much as any within its pale. We have stuck by it through evil report and good report, while many who once talked more loudly about their Churchmanship have seceded and gone over to Rome. We stick by it still, and will resist all attempts to Romanize it to the very death! We know its value, and would hand it down unimpaired to our children's children.

But we steadily refuse to exalt the Church above Christ, or to teach our people that membership of the Church is identical with membership of Christ. We refuse to assign it an authority for which we find no warrant either in Scripture or the Articles. We protest against the modern practice of first personifying the Church, then deifying it, and finally idolizing it. We hold that Church councils,

Church synods, and Church convocations, may err, and that “things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.” We can find no proof in the Bible that the Lord Jesus Christ ever meant a body of erring mortals, whether ordained or not ordained, to be treated as infallible. We consequently hold that a vast quantity of language in this day about “the Church” and the “voice of the Church” is mere unmeaning verbiage. It is “the talk of the lips, which tendeth only to penury.” (Prov. xiv. 23.)

(3) I go on to say that Evangelical Religion *does not undervalue the Christian ministry*. It is not true to say that we do. We regard it as an honourable office instituted by Christ Himself, and of general necessity for carrying on the work of the Gospel. We look on ministers as preachers of God’s Word, God’s ambassadors, God’s messengers, God’s servants, God’s shepherds, God’s stewards, God’s overseers, and labourers in God’s vineyard.

But we steadily refuse to admit that Christian ministers are in any sense sacrificing priests, mediators between God and man, lords of men’s consciences, or private confessors. We refuse it, not only because we cannot see it in the Bible, but also because we have read the lessons of Church history. We find that Sacerdotalism, or priestcraft, has frequently been the curse of Christianity, and the ruin of true religion. And we say boldly that the exaltation of the ministerial office to an unscriptural place and extravagant dignity in the Church of England in the present day, is likely to alienate the affections of the laity, to ruin the Church, and to be the source of every kind of error and superstition.

(4) I go on to say that Evangelical Religion *does not undervalue the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper*. It is not true to say that we do. We honour them as holy ordinances appointed by Christ Himself, and as blessed means of grace, which in all who use them rightly, worthily, and with faith, “have a wholesome effect or operation.”

But we steadily refuse to admit that Christ’s Sacraments convey grace *ex opere operato*, and that in every case where they are administered, good must of necessity be done. We refuse to admit that they are the grand media between Christ and the soul,—above faith, above preaching, and above prayer. We protest against the idea that in baptism the use of water, in the name of the Trinity, is invariably and necessarily accompanied by regeneration. We protest against the practice of encouraging any one to come to the Lord’s table, unless he repents truly of sin, has a lively faith in Christ, and is in charity with all men. We protest against the theory that the Lord’s Supper is a sac-

rifice, as a theory alike contrary to the Bible, Articles, and Prayer-book. And above all, we protest against the notion of any local presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, under the forms of bread and wine, as an "idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians."

(5) I go on to say that Evangelical Religion *does not undervalue the English Prayer-book*. It is not true to say that we do. We honour that excellent book as a matchless form of public worship, and one most admirably adapted to the wants of human nature. We use it with pleasure in our public ministrations, and should grieve to see the day when its use is forbidden.

But we do not presume to say there can be no acceptable worship of God without the Prayer-book. It does not possess the same authority as the Bible. We steadily refuse to give to the Prayer-book the honour which is only due to the Holy Scriptures, or to regard it as forming, together with the Bible, the rule of faith for the Church of England. We deny that it contains one single truth of religion, besides, over and above what is contained in God's Word. And we hold that to say the Bible and Prayer-book together are "the Church's Creed," is foolish and absurd.

(6) I go on to say that Evangelical Religion *does not undervalue Episcopacy*. It is not true to say that we do. We give to our Bishops as much honour and respect as any section of the Church of England does, and in reality a great deal more. We thoroughly believe that Episcopal government, rightly administered, is the best form of Church government that can be had in this evil world.

But we steadily refuse to believe that Bishops are infallible, or that their words are to be believed when they are not in harmony with the Scriptures,—or that Episcopacy is the first test of a Church being a true Church,—or that Presbyterian orders are not valid orders,—or that non-episcopal Christians are to be handed over to the uncovenanted mercies of God. We hold as firmly as any that "from the beginning there have been bishops, priests, and deacons." But we refuse to join in the bigoted cry, "No Bishop, no Church."

I repeat that in due respect to the Episcopal office we yield to none. But we never will admit that the acts and doings and deliverances of any Bishops, however numerous, and by whatever name they are called, whether a Pan-Anglican Synod or not, are to be received as infallible, and not to be submitted to free criticism. We cannot forget that erring Bishops ruined the Church of England in the days of Charles the First,—almost ruined it again in 1662, when they cast out the Puritans,—and nearly ruined it once more in the last century, when they shut out the Methodists. No: we have read history, and we .

have not forgotten that while we have had a Cranmer and a Parker, we have also had a Sheldon and a Laud; and that while we have had stars in our ecclesiastical firmament like Hooper, Ridley, and Jewell, we have also had men who were a disgrace to their office, like the semi-Papists, Cheyney and Montague, and the subtle politician, Atterbury.

(7) I go on to say that Evangelical Religion *does not object to handsome churches*, good Ecclesiastical architecture, a well-ordered ceremonial, and a well-conducted service. It is not true to say that we do. We like handsome, well-arranged places of worship, when we can get them. We abhor slovenliness and disorder in God's service, as much as any. We would have all things done "decently and in order." (1 Cor. xiv. 40.)

But we steadily maintain that simplicity should be the grand characteristic of Christian worship. We hold that human nature is so easily led astray, and so thoroughly inclined to idolatry, that ornament in Christian worship should be used with a very sparing hand. We firmly believe that the tendency of excessive ornament, and a theatrical ceremonial, is to defeat the primary end for which worship was established, to draw away men's minds from Christ, and to make them walk by sight and not by faith. We hold above all that the inward and spiritual character of the congregation is of far more importance than the architecture and adornments of the church. We dare not forget the great principle of Scripture, that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.)

(8) I go on to say that Evangelical religion *does not undervalue unity*. It is not true to say that we do. We love harmony and peace as much as any Christians in the world. We long for that day when there shall be no more controversy, strife and division; when Ephraim shall no longer vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim.

But we firmly maintain that there can be no real unity without oneness in the faith. We protest against the idea of unity based on a common Episcopacy, and not on a common belief of Christ's Gospel. As for the theories of those who make advances to Rome, and hold out the hand to the Church of Bonner and Gardiner, while they turn their backs on the Church of Knox and Rutherford, Chalmers and M'Cheyne, we repudiate them with indignation as unworthy of English Churchmen. We abhor the very idea of reunion with Rome, unless Rome first purges herself from her many false doctrines and superstitions.

(9) Last, but not least, I say that Evangelical Religion *does not undervalue Christian holiness and self-denial*. It is not true to say that we do. We desire as much as any to promote habitual spirituality of heart and life in Christians. We give place to none in exalting humili-

ty, charity, meekness, gentleness, temperance, purity, self-denial, good works, and separation from the world. With all our defects, we are second to no section of Christ's Church in attaching the utmost importance to private prayer, private Bible-reading, and private communion with God.

But we steadily deny that true holiness consists in calling everything "holy" in religion, and thrusting forward the word "holy" with sickening frequency at every turn. We will not allow that it is really promoted by an ostentatious observance of Lent, by keeping Ecclesiastical fasts and saints' days, by frequent communion, by joining Houses of mercy, by doing penance, by going to confession, by wearing peculiar dresses, by decorating our persons with enormous crosses, by frequent gestures, and postures expressive of humility, in public worship, by walking in processions and the like. We believe, on the contrary, that such holiness (so-called) too often begins from the outside, and is a complete delusion. It has a "show of wisdom," and may satisfy silly young women and brainless young men, who like to compound for races and balls one part of their week, by asceticism and will-worship at another. But we utterly deny that it is the holiness recommended by St. Paul and St. Peter, St. James and St. John.*

I leave my list of negatives here. I have not time to dwell on them further. The sum of the whole matter is this:—we give all lawful honour to learning, the Church, the ministry, the Sacrament, Episcopacy, the Prayer-book, Church ornament, unity, and holiness; but we firmly decline to give them more honour than we find given to them in God's Word.

We dare not take up any other position, because of the plain

* I am aware that this paragraph is likely to be misinterpreted, and may give offence. A captious reader may say that I consider keeping Lent and Saints' Days and fasts is wrong. I beg to remind him that I say nothing of the kind. I only say that these things do not constitute Christian holiness. I will go even further, I will say that the history of the last three hundred years in England does not incline me to think that these things, however well meant, are conducive to real holiness.

I am quite sure that the substance of this paragraph is imperatively demanded by the times. Things have come to this pass in England that thousands of Churchmen are making the whole of religion to consist in externals. Against such a religion, as long as I live, I desire to protest. It may suit an Italian bandit, who oscillates between Lent and Carnival, between fasting and robbing. It ought never to satisfy a Bible-reading Christian. It is the religion that the natural heart likes, but it is not the religion of God.

When I speak of an "ostentatious" observance of Lent, I do it with a reason. There are hundreds of people who "scruple" at weddings and dinner parties in Lent, but rush to balls, theatres, and races as soon as Lent is over! If this is Christian holiness, we may throw our Bibles to the winds.

teaching of the Scriptures. We read there how the ark itself was utterly useless to Israel when trusted in as a saviour, and exalted into the place of God.—We read there how God Himself has said, that the sacrifices and feasts which He Himself had appointed, were “abominations” and a “weariness” to Him, when rested on as ends and not as means.—We read there how the very temple itself, with all its divinely ordained services, was denounced as a “den of thieves,” by Christ Himself. (1 Sam. iv. 1–11; Isaiah l. 11–15; Luke xix. 46.)

And what do we learn from all this? We learn that we must be very careful how we give primary honour to things invented by man, or even to things which, though ordained by God, are secondary things in religion. We learn, above all, that those who accuse us of undervaluing the things I have mentioned, because we refuse to make them idols, are only exposing their own ignorance of Scripture. They know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. We may listen to their slanderous charges and misrepresentations with calm indifference. Let them show us that we do not estimate learning, the Church, Ministry, the Sacraments, the Prayer-book, Episcopacy, unity, and holiness, with the estimate of Scripture, and we will confess that we have erred. But till they can do that, we shall firmly maintain that we are right and they are wrong.

III. It only remains for me to say a few words on the last question I propose to consider:—“*What is it that makes much religion appear to us not Evangelical?*”

This is no doubt a delicate point, but a very serious and important one. I repeat here what I have remarked before. We do not say that men who are not professedly Evangelical ignore and disbelieve the leading doctrines of the Evangelical creed. We say nothing of the kind. But we do say confidently, that there are many ways in which the faith of Christ may be marred and spoiled, without being positively denied. And here we venture to think is the very reason that so much religion called Christian, is not truly Evangelical. The Gospel in fact is a most curiously and delicately compounded medicine, and a medicine that is very easily spoiled.

You may spoil the Gospel by *substitution*. You have only to withdraw from the eyes of the sinner the grand object which the Bible proposes to faith,—Jesus Christ; and to substitute another object in His place,—the Church, the Ministry, the Confessional, Baptism, or the Lord’s Supper,—and the mischief is done. Substitute anything for Christ, and the Gospel is totally spoiled! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

You may spoil the Gospel by *addition*. You have only to add to

Christ, the grand object of faith, some other objects as equally worthy of honour, and the mischief is done. Add anything to Christ, and the Gospel ceases to be a pure Gospel! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

You may spoil the Gospel by *interposition*. You have only to push something between Christ and the eye of the soul, to draw away the sinner's attention from the Saviour, and the mischief is done. Interpose anything between man and Christ, and man will neglect Christ for the thing interposed! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

You may spoil the Gospel by *disproportion*. You have only to attach an exaggerated importance to the secondary things of Christianity, and a diminished importance to the first things, and the mischief is done. Once alter the proportion of the parts of truth, and truth soon becomes downright error! Do this, either directly or indirectly, and your religion ceases to be Evangelical.

Lastly, but not least, you may completely spoil the Gospel by *confused and contradictory directions*. Complicated and obscure statements about faith, baptism, Church privileges, and the benefits of the Lord's Supper, all jumbled together, and thrown down without order before hearers, make the Gospel no Gospel at all! Confused and disorderly statements of Christianity are almost as bad as no statement at all! Religion of this sort is not Evangelical.

I know not whether I succeed in making my meaning clear. I am very anxious to do so. Myriads of our fellow-countrymen are utterly unable to see any difference between one thing and another in religion, and are hence continually led astray. Thousands can see no distinct difference between sermons and sermons, and preachers and preachers, and have only a vague idea that "sometimes all is not right." I will endeavour, therefore, to illustrate my subject by two familiar illustrations.

A doctor's prescription of a medicine often contains five or six different ingredients. There is so much of one drug and so much of another; a little of this, and a good deal of that. Now what man of common sense can fail to see that the whole value of the prescription depends on a faithful and honest use of it? Take away one ingredient, and substitute another; leave out one ingredient altogether; add a little to the quantity of one drug; take away a little from the quantity of another. Do this, I say, to the prescription, my good friend, and it is a thousand chances to one that you spoil it altogether. The thing that was meant for your health, you have converted into downright poison.

Apply this little simple parable to the Gospel. Regard it as a medicine sent down from heaven, for the curing of man's spiritual disease,

by a Physician of infinite skill and power; a medicine of singular efficacy, which man with all his wisdom could never have devised. Tell me now, as one of common sense, does it not stand to reason that this medicine should be used without the slightest alteration, and precisely in the manner and proportion that the great Physician intended? Tell me whether you have the least right to expect good from it, if you have tampered with it in the smallest degree? You know what the answer to these questions must be: your conscience will give the reply. Spoil the proportions of your doctor's prescription, and you will spoil its usefulness, even though you may call it medicine. Spoil the proportions of Christ's Gospel, and you spoil its efficacy. You may call it religion if you like; but you must not call it Evangelical. The several doctrines may be there, but they are useless if you have not observed the *proportions*.

The brazen serpent supplies another valuable illustration of my meaning. The whole efficacy of that miraculous remedy, we must remember, depended on using it precisely in the way that God directed.—It was *the serpent* of brass, and nothing else, that brought health to him that looked at it. The man who thought it wise to look at the brazen altar, or at the pole on which the serpent hung, would have died of his wounds.—It was the serpent *looked at*, and only looked at, that cured the poor bitten Israelite. The man who fancied it would be better to touch the serpent, or to offer a sacrifice to it, would have got no benefit.—It was the serpent looked at by each sufferer *with his own eyes*, and not with the eyes of another, that healed. The man who bade another look for him, would have found a vicarious look useless.—Looking, looking, only looking, was the prescription.—The sufferer, and only the sufferer, must look for himself with his own eyes.—The serpent, the brazen serpent, and nothing but the serpent, was the object for the eye.

Let us apply that marvellous and most deeply typical history to the Gospel. We have no warrant for expecting the slightest benefit for our souls from Christ's salvation, unless we use it precisely in the way that Christ appointed. If we add anything to it, take anything away from it, try to improve the terms, depart in the slightest degree from the path which the Bible marks out for us, we have no right whatever to look for any good being done. God's plan of salvation cannot possibly be mended or improved. He who tries to amend or improve it, will find that he spoils it altogether.

In one word I wind up this last part of my subject by saying, that a religion to be really "Evangelical" and really good, must be the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, as Christ prescribed it and expounded it to the Apostles;—the truth, the whole

truth, and nothing but the truth;—the terms, the whole terms, and nothing but the terms,—in all their fulness, all their freeness, all their simplicity, all their presentness. Here, I am sorry to say, a vast quantity of so-called religion in the present day appears to me to break down. It does not come up to the standard I have just given. Things are added to it, or things are taken away, or things are put in their wrong places, or things are set forth in their wrong proportions. And hence, painful as it is, I cannot avoid the conclusion that much of the religion of our own time does not deserve to be called Evangelical. I do not charge all clergymen who are not “Evangelical” with not being “Christians.” I do not say that the religion they teach is not Christianity. I trust I am not so uncharitable as to say anything of this kind. But I do say that, for the reasons already assigned, they appear to me to teach that which is not Christ’s whole truth. In a word, they do not give full weight, full measure, and the prescription of the Gospel accurately made up. The parts are there, but not the proportions.

I cannot bring my paper to a conclusion without offering some practical suggestions about the present duties of the Evangelical body. We have been considering what Evangelical religion is and is not. A few pages devoted to our immediate duties, in the present position of the Church, can hardly be thought misapplied.

The times no doubt are very critical, full of danger to our beloved Church, full of danger to the nation. Never has there been such an unblushing avowal of Popish opinions among Churchmen, and such shameless additions to the faith as defined in our Articles. The grand question is, whether our Protestantism shall die or live? Now I believe much depends on the attitude and line of conduct taken up by the Evangelical body. If they know the times and do their duty, there is hope for the Church. If they are timid, supine, compromising, vacillating, and indolent, there is no hope at all.

(1) I suggest, for one thing, that we ought to exercise a special jealousy over *our own personal religion*. Let us take heed that it is thoroughly and entirely Evangelical. The times we live in are desperately unfavourable to a sharply-cut, decided, distinct, doctrinal Christianity. A fog of vague liberalism over-spreads the ecclesiastical horizon. A settled determination to think everybody is right, and nobody is wrong, everything is true, and nothing is false, meets us at every turn. The world is possessed with a devil of false charity about religion. Men try to persuade us, like Gallio, that the alleged differences between creeds and schools of thought are only about “words and names,” and that it is “all the same thing.” In times like these, let us be on our guard, and take heed to our souls.—“Watch ye: stand fast in

the faith. Quit you like men: be strong.” (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) Let us steadfastly resolve to stand fast in the old paths, the good way of our Protestant Reformers. Narrow, old-fashioned, obsolete, as some may be pleased to call that way, they will never show us a better. The nearer we draw to the great realities of death, judgment, and eternity, the more excellent will that way appear. When I go down the valley of the shadow of death, and my feet touch the cold waters, I want something better than vague, high-sounding words, or the painted playthings and gilded trifles of man-made ceremonials. Give me no stone altars and would-be confessors. Give me no surpliced priests or pretended sacrifice in my bedroom. Put no man or form between me and Christ. Give me a real staff for my hand such as David had, and real meat and drink for my soul such as aged Paul felt within him, and feeling cried, “I am not ashamed.” (2 Tim. i. 12.) I must know distinctly whom I believe, what I believe, and why I believe, and in what manner I believe. Nothing, nothing will answer these questions satisfactorily, but thorough, downright Evangelical Religion. Let us make sure that this religion is our own.

(2) I suggest, secondly, that ministers who call themselves Evangelical, ought to be specially *careful that they do not compromise their principles*, and damage their testimony, by vain attempts to conciliate the world.

This is a great danger in these days. It is a sunken rock, on which I fear many are striking, and doing themselves immense harm. The plausible pretext of making our services more attractive, and cutting the ground from under the feet of Ritualists, too often induces Evangelical ministers to do things which they had far better let alone. New church decorations, new church music, and a semi-histrionic mode of going through church worship, are things which I suggest that we must watch most narrowly, and keep at arm’s length. They are points on which we must take heed that we do not let in the Pope and the devil.

Tampering with these things, we may be sure, does no real good. It may seem to please the world, and have a “show of wisdom,” but it never converts the world, and makes the world believe. We had far better leave it alone. Some Evangelical clergymen, I suspect, have begun flirting and trifling with these things with the best intentions, and have ended by losing their own characters, disgusting their true believing hearers, making themselves miserable, and going out of the world under a cloud.

Oh, no! we cannot be too jealous in these days about the slightest departure from the “faith once delivered to the saints,” and from the worship handed down to us by the Reformers. We cannot be too care-

ful to add nothing to, and take nothing away from, the simplicity of the Gospel, and to do nothing in our worship which seems to cast the slightest reflection on Evangelical principles.—“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”—“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (Gal. v. 9; Matt. xvi. 6.)

Let us mark the testimony of Scripture on this subject. The Epistle to the Galatians is the inspired handbook for these times. Mark how in that Epistle St. Paul declares, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”—Mark how he repeats it: “As we said before, so we say again, If any man preach any other Gospel than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”—Mark how he tells us that “when he came to Antioch he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed.”—Mark how he says to the Galatians, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.” And then comes the solemn and weighty remark which ought to ring in the ears of many: “I am afraid of you.” (1 Gal. v. 9; ii. 11; iv. 10, 11.)

Let us carefully observe how little good they do who attempt to mix up Evangelical preaching and a Ritual ceremonial. Little did I say?—they do no good at all! The world is never won by trimming, and compromising, by facing both ways, and trying to please all. The cross of Christ is never made more acceptable by sawing off its corners, or by polishing, varnishing, and adorning it. Processions, and banners, and flowers, and crosses, and an excessive quantity of music, and elaborate services, and beautiful vestments, may please children and weak-minded people. But they never helped forward heart-conversion and heart-sanctification, and they never will. Scores of English clergymen, I strongly suspect, have found out too late that St. Paul’s words are deeply true, when he says, “It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.” (Heb. xiii. 9.)

I grant freely that we have need of much patience in these times. No doubt it is very provoking to be twitted [taunted] with the nakedness, poverty, and meagreness (so called) of Evangelical worship. It is very annoying to see our younger members slipping away to churches where there are processions, banners, flowers, incense, and a thoroughly histrionic and gorgeous ceremonial. It is vexing to hear them say, that “they feel so much better after these services.” But none of these things must move us. “He that believeth shall not make haste.” (Isaiah xxviii. 16.) The end will never justify illicit means. Let us never leave the high ground of principle under any false pressure, from whatever side it may come. Let us hold on our way, and be jealously sensitive of any departure from simplicity. Popularity obtained

by pandering to the senses or the sentiment of our hearers is not worth anything. Worshippers who are not content with the Bible, the cross of Christ, simple prayers and simple praise, are worshippers of little value. It is useless to try to please them, because their spiritual taste is diseased.

Let us remember, not least, the enormous injury which we may do to souls, if we once allow ourselves to depart in the least degree from the simplicity of the Gospel either in our doctrine or in our worship. Who can estimate the shipwrecks that might occur in a single night, and the lives that might be lost, if a light-house keeper dared to alter but a *little* the colour of his light?—Who can estimate the deaths that might take place in a town, if the chemist took on himself to depart but a *little* from the doctor's prescriptions?—Who can estimate the wholesale misery that might be caused in a war, by maps a *little* wrong and charts a *little* incorrect?—Who can estimate these things?—Then perhaps you may have some idea of the spiritual harm that ministers may do by departing in the slightest degree from the Scriptural proportions of the Gospel, or by trying to catch the world by dressing simple old Evangelical religion in new clothes.

(3) I suggest, finally, that *we must not allow Evangelical Religion to be thrust out of the Church of England without a struggle.*

It is a religion which is worth a struggle; for it can point to works which no other school in the Church of England has ever equalled. In this matter we fear no comparison, if honestly and fairly made. We confess with sorrow that we have done but little compared to what we ought to have done; and yet we say boldly, that both abroad and at home no Churchmen have done so much good to souls as those who are called Evangelical. What Sierra Leone can the Ritualists place before us as the result of their system? What Tinnevely bears testimony to the truth of their school? What manufacturing towns have they rescued from semi-heathenism? What mining districts have they Christianized? What teeming populations of poor in our large cities can they point to, as evangelized by their agencies? We boldly challenge a reply. Let them come forward and name them. In the day when Evangelical Religion is cast out of the Church of England, the usefulness of the Church will be ended and gone. Nothing gives the Church of England such power and influence as genuine, well-worked, well-administered Evangelical Religion.

But it is a religion that can only be preserved amongst us just now by a great effort, and a mighty struggle. For our nation's sake, for our children's sake, for the world's sake, for the honour and glory of our God, let us gird up the loins of our minds, and resolve that the struggle shall be made.

It is a struggle, we can honestly call the world to witness, which is not one of our seeking. The controversy is thrust upon us, whether we like it or not. We are driven to a painful dilemma. We must either sit by in silence, like sneaks and cowards, and let the Church of England be unprotestantized and re-united with Rome;—or else we must base-ly desert the dear old Church and let traitors work their will;—or else we must look the danger manfully in the face, and *fight!*—Our fight, of course, is to be carried on with the same Word that Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley fought with, and not with carnal weapons. But as they did, so must we do: we must stand up and fight. Yes! even if a secession of our antagonists is the consequence, we must not shrink from fighting. Let every man go to the place that suits him best. Let Papists join the Pope, and Romanists retire to Rome.* But if we want our Church to continue Protestant and Evangelical, we must not be afraid to fight. There are times when there is a mine of deep meaning in our Lord's words,—“He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” (Luke xxii. 36.) To such times we have come.

Does any one ask me what is to be done? I answer that the path of duty, to my mind, is clear, plain, and unmistakable. Union and organization of all Protestant and Evangelical Churchmen,—untiring expo-

* I trust that no one will misunderstand me here. If any one supposes that I want to narrow the pale of the Church of England, and to make it the Church of one particular party, he is totally mistaken. I am quite aware that my Church is eminently liberal, truly comprehensive, and tolerant of wide differences of opinion. But I deny that the Church ever meant its members to be downright Papists.

The Church has always found room in its ranks for men of very different schools of thought. There has been room for Ridley, and room for Hooper,—room for Jewell, and room for Hooker,—room for Whitgift, and room for Tillotson,—room for Usher, and room for Jeremy Taylor,—room for Davenant, and room for Andrews,—room for Waterland, and room for Beveridge,—room for Chillingworth, and room for Bull,—room for Whitby, and room for Scott,—room for Toplady, and room for Fletcher. Where is the Churchman who would like any one of these men to have been shut out of the Church of England? If there is such a one, I do not agree with him.

But if any man wants me to believe that our Church ever meant to allow its clergy to teach the Romish doctrine of the Real Presence, the sacrifice of the Mass, and the practice of auricular confession, without let or hindrance, I tell him plainly that I cannot believe it. My common sense revolts against it. I would as soon believe that black is white, or that two and two make five.

Between the old High Churchman and the Ritualists I draw a broad line of distinction. With all his faults and mistakes, in my judgment, the old High Churchman is a true Churchman, and is thoroughly and heartily opposed to Popery. The Ritualists, on the other hand, scorn the very name of Protestant; and, if words mean anything, are so like Roman Catholics, that a plain man can see no difference between their tenets and those of Rome.

sure of the Popish dealings of our antagonists, by the pulpit, the platform, and the press,—lawsuits whenever there is a reasonable hope of success,—appeals to Parliament for declarative statutes, and the reform of our Ecclesiastical courts,—bold, decided, prompt action, the moment any necessity requires,—these are the weapons of our warfare. They are weapons which, from one end of the country to the other, we ought to wield, boldly, untiringly, unflinchingly, be the sacrifice and cost what it may. But I say, “No surrender! No desertion! No compromise! No disgraceful peace!”

Let us then resolve to “contend earnestly for the faith.” By preaching and by praying, by pulpit and by platform, by pen and by tongue, by printing and by speaking, let us labour to maintain Evangelical Religion within the Church of England, and to resist the enemies which we see around us.—We are not weak if we stand together and act together. The middle classes and the poor are yet sound at heart. They do not love Popery. God Himself has not forsaken us, and truth is on our side.—But be the issue of the conflict what it may, let us nail our colours to the mast; and, if need be, go down with our colours flying. Let us only settle it deeply in our minds, that without Protestant and Evangelical principles, a Church is as useless as a well without water. In one word, when the Church of England becomes Popish once more, it will be a Church not worth preserving.