

# CHARGES AND ADDRESSES

*to the Diocese of Liverpool,*

by

the Right Reverend Bishop of Liverpool,

John Charles Ryle, D.D.,

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## For Doctrinal Christianity<sup>1</sup>

My Reverend and Lay Brethren, I address you for the first time at a visitation in Wigan under a deep sense of responsibility. For the last three centuries the office of an English Bishop, from Archbishop Cranmer down to Archbishop Tait, and from Bishop Ridley down to Bishop Jackson, has always been one of peculiar difficulty and anxiety. I doubt whether it was ever more so than it is at the present day. Never were there so many knots to untie, and so many problems to solve! It is a day of bitter party spirit, and of scathing newspaper criticism. A Bishop lives under the fierce blaze of public opinion; and he has always the sorrowful feeling that, whatever he may say or do, somebody or other is sure to be displeased.

However, I have a duty to do, and I must do it independently of human praise or blame, 'as to the Lord and not to man.' I claim no immunity from error, and I ask you to put the best construction on what I say. Above all, I ask you to join me in praying, that in this and all my public deliverances I may have meekness and wisdom, may combine decision and firmness with courtesy and toleration, and may be just and fair to all.

About the general statistics of our new Diocese, its acreage and population, its number of incumbents and curates, I shall not waste your time by saying anything. They are all points which you will find fully handled in my first Charge, delivered at Liverpool, and I, therefore, abstain from repetition. In my

<sup>1</sup> A charge at the Primary Visitation in the Parish Church of All Saints, Wigan, October 20, 1881.

second Charge I purposely confine myself to the peculiar circumstances of the District in which we are assembled today, its wants, and the best way of meeting them. I also wish to speak of some matters of public interest, which, for want of time, I was compelled to pass over in my first Charge.

There is, however, one point of general Diocesan interest which I think it right to mention before I take up other subjects. The point to which I refer is the exceptionally small number of Rural Deaneries into which our new Diocese is at present divided. For a population exceeding one million, and for 200 incumbents and 140 curates, 340 clergy in all, there are at this moment only six Rural Deans. Some of you, perhaps, are not aware that this is a state of things in which we stand entirely alone. There is not a single diocese in England and Wales which is similarly situated. In Lichfield there are forty-eight Deaneries, in Norwich there are forty-one. In Rochester, a Diocese much like our own, there are nineteen. In St. Asaph, with fewer clergy and only 260,000 people, there are thirteen. Even in Chester, with little more than half our population and about the same number of clergy, there are nine. Of course the reason of this state of things is obvious. The West Derby Hundred has increased its inhabitants enormously during this century, and our ecclesiastical arrangements, which answered very well a hundred years ago, are quite insufficient now. But I am bound to say that I consider this small number of Rural Deaneries is a serious defect in our Diocesan organization which wants amending, and I propose to attempt the amendment at an early period. No one, perhaps, but a Bishop, can fully estimate the value of a Rural Dean, as a medium for obtaining information, and for conveying his wishes to the clergy. But a Rural Dean, it must be remembered, is an entirely unpaid officer, and it is not wise or fair to overweight him with incessant demands on his time. And when he has more than about twenty-five benefices in his Deanery, I think he has too much on his hands.

I propose, therefore, to have nine Rural Deaneries in our Diocese instead of six, and to effect the change by dividing each of the three largest Deaneries—North Liverpool, South Liverpool, and Prescott—into two, leaving the other three—Winwick, Wigan, and Ormskirk—almost unaltered. I say *almost* advisedly. I think it quite possible that in some few cases an addition to, or subtraction from, each of the three last-named Deaneries might be convenient, and when a rearrangement is being made for the whole Diocese, it would be wise to effect any changes that may seem desirable. Our position, in one respect, is very convenient for changes. Our existing Deaneries are not, as in many counties, continuous with County Hundreds. We have only one Hundred for the whole Diocese, and the boundaries of Deaneries can easily be altered.

In carrying out the change I have referred to, I wish particularly to have the advice and aid of my Rural Deans, and I should feel obliged if they will bring the whole matter before their respective Ruri-decanal Conferences at an early period. Any suggestions they can offer will receive careful consideration. But I

feel strongly that the change is absolutely necessary, if our new Diocese is to be officered in proportion to other Dioceses in England and Wales. I trust you will believe that I have not the slightest wish to overload the Diocese with Episcopal officials. But I cannot think that two Archdeacons and nine Rural Deans will form an extravagantly large staff for an English Bishop in a Diocese of more than a million souls. As matters stand at present, if our organization is right, that of other dioceses is wrong; and, *vice versa*, if their organization is right, we need a change.

To all this let me add one more argument. I am very anxious to commence a system of meeting annually the clergy of each Rural Deanery, in a private, quiet, informal manner, for the purpose of spiritual communion, such as cannot be obtained in large, public, official gatherings, and for the promotion of brotherly feeling, mutual confidence, and better knowledge of one another. I know that such private Ruri-decanal gatherings have been found most useful and edifying by other Bishops, and I have no doubt they would do good here. I am sure we all need our spiritual life quickened by intercourse with other servants of our common Master, and perhaps if we saw each other oftener we should understand each other better. But such meetings must be small and quiet if they are to be edifying and refreshing, and I must frankly say that so long as our three largest Deaneries are undivided I should shrink from attempting them.

I turn from this point of Diocesan organization to one of far more serious importance. That point is the spiritual condition of the eastern part of our Diocese of Liverpool, and the best mode of meeting its very peculiar wants. It is a large and wide subject, and demands our best attention.

That the present provision of means of grace made by the Church of England in some parts of this District is totally insufficient, is such a patent fact that I shall not spend time in proving it. You have only to run your eye down the column in our Diocesan Calendar which shows the population of each benefice, and you will see enough, and more than enough, of painful evidence. In the Deanery of Wigan I find Haigh with 7500 people, Ince with 15,000, Pemberton with 11,000, St. Catherine's, Wigan, with 10,000, St. George's with 11,000, St. Thomas' with 9000, and Upholland with 6000. In the Deanery of Prescot I find Eccleston St. Thomas' with 12,000 people, Fairfield, Liverpool, with 16,000, Farnworth with 11,000, St. Helen's with 18,000, and Widnes with 13,000. In the Deanery of Winwick, I find two parishes in Warrington with 13,000 in one and 9000 in the other. Even in the Deanery of Ormskirk, which is better off in the matter of churches, I find as many as seven benefices with more than 5000 souls. In every one of these cases, let me add, I suspect my statement is below the returns of the recent census.

The state of things I have described is most painful and unsatisfactory. Common sense points out that it is physically impossible for the Incumbent of such large parishes as most of those I have named, to overtake the work committed

to him, to meet the spiritual wants of his parishioners, and to do justice to himself and the Church of England. If he had the bodily strength of Samson, and the burning zeal of St. Paul, it would be impossible. The thing cannot be done. There are but twelve hours in each day, and one Sunday in each week, and if he taxes his energies to the uttermost he can only visit a certain number of hours, and preach a certain number of times. And then, after all, he must continually feel that a great deal of work is left undone. I can assure all my clergy who are placed in such positions as those I have described, that I feel the deepest sympathy with them, and am determined, by God's help, to do all I can, so long as I am Bishop of Liverpool, to lighten their labour and strengthen their hands.

It must, besides, never be forgotten that in many of the large parishes in this district the clergyman's difficulties are not to be measured by the *number* only of his parishioners. It is the peculiar *occupation*, and by consequence the peculiar *character*, of the people which creates most formidable obstacles in his way. The workers underground in coal pits, the labourers employed in the trying atmosphere of chemical and glass works and iron furnaces, by night and by day, need special treatment, and require to be approached in a special way. To suppose that it is enough to build a handsome church, and set up an elaborate liturgical service for these classes, is, in my judgment, a complete mistake. The first thing needed is not buildings, but living men—men ordained, if you can get them, men not ordained, if you can get no other agents; but, in any case, men who have the grace of God and the love of souls in their hearts, and will go in and out among the roughest classes in a friendly manner, and win their confidence.

For, after all, the clergyman of the worst and blackest parish in a district must never allow himself to despair. The darkest-looking and most uncouth collier, or miner, or iron worker, or labourer in chemical works, is a man just like ourselves by nature, and differing only in outward appearance, from the circumstances of his position. Like ourselves, he is open to kindness and sympathy. Like ourselves, he has a heart that can feel sorrow and trouble, and a body liable to sickness and disease and death. Like ourselves, he can often be got at through the simple avenue of attention to wife or children or parents or brothers or sisters or friends. I charge my reverend brethren to keep all this continually in mind. Colliers and iron workers and all their companions of like occupations are flesh and blood, and have souls, affections, and consciences like you and me. They are to be won for Christ, if we go to work in the right way, and have God's blessing. The last day will show that collieries have not only sent up coals for our fires, but have also produced some bright jewels for our Redeemer's crown.

Multiplication of right-minded living agents is the first and foremost remedy that I must always recommend to the incumbents of great colliery parishes. By constant importunate application to those valuable Institutions, the Pastoral Aid,

the Additional Curates, and the Diocesan Church Aid Societies, try to get ordained helpers if you can, and lay-agents if you cannot. Encourage and invite every right-minded layman near you to come forward and give you his help. Never, never be afraid of enlisting the aid of the laity. Cast away for ever the old tradition that religious work is to be left to the clergy alone. Boldly make use of 'lay' talent, and you will never be without 'lay' talent to use. Trust the laity, and the laity will trust you. Stir up every Christian man and woman in your congregation, who has a few hours to spare in the week, to give you some voluntary aid. Break up your huge parish into well-organized territorial districts, and give to each helper his own special district. Urge your helpers to get together people wherever they can, in a shed, or a cottage, or a barn, and to give the simplest and most elementary Christian instruction, plain, kindly talk about Christ, simple extempore prayer, and hearty, lively singing. Do this, and persevere in doing it, and I am sure you will not labour in vain. Do this, and persevere in doing it, and, in process of time, the Mission-room, the Church and the regular parochial district will be the happy result, and, what is far better, a harvest of saved souls.

Everything, however, I hope I need not remind you, depends on the message which your living agents proclaim. They must know what they have got to do. If they only go about telling men not to get drunk, not to fight, not to gamble, not to swear, not to break the Sabbath, they may just as well stay at home. If they want to do good, they must tell men to believe as well as repent. They must tell the story of the cross of Christ. They must magnify that grand article of the Apostles' creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' They must make much of that doctrine which fits the empty heart of man just as the right key fits the lock, I mean the doctrine of free and full pardon of sin through faith in the vicarious death of Christ.

This is the glorious doctrine that was the strength of the Apostles when they went forth to the Gentiles to preach a new religion. They began, a few poor fishermen, in a despised corner of the earth. But in a few years, without money to bribe adherents or arms to compel assent, they turned the world upside down. They changed the face of the Roman Empire. They emptied the heathen temples of their worshippers, and made the whole system of idolatry crumble away. And what was the weapon by which they did it all? It was *free forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ*.

This is the doctrine which brought light into Europe 350 years ago, at the time of the blessed Reformation, and enabled one solitary monk, Martin Luther, to shake the whole Church of Rome. Through his preaching and writing the scales fell from men's eyes, and the chains of their souls were loosed. And what was the lever that gave him his power? It was *free forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ*.

This is the doctrine that revived our own Church in the middle of last century, when Whitefield and the Wesleys, and Berridge and Venn, broke the wretched spirit of slumber which had come over the land, and roused men to think. The sermons of these good evangelists, no doubt, were often rough and unpolished. But the matter they contained was 'life from the dead' to myriads of souls. They began a mighty spiritual revolution, without the patronage of Church or State, and with little seeming likelihood of success. They began, few in number, with small encouragement from the rich and great. But they prospered, and produced results for which the ungrateful Church of England has never been sufficiently thankful to this hour. And why? Because they preached *free forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ*.

This is the doctrine which is the true strength of any Church on earth at this day. It is not orders, or endowments, or liturgies, or learning, or grand cathedrals, that will keep a Church alive. Let free forgiveness through Christ be faithfully proclaimed in her pulpits, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Let it be buried, or kept back, and her candlestick shall soon be taken away. When the Saracens invaded the lands where Jerome and Athanasius, Cyprian and Augustine, once wrote and preached, they found Bishops and liturgies, I make no question. But I fear they found no preaching of free forgiveness of sins, and so they swept the Churches of those lands clean away. The Churches were a body without a vital principle, and therefore they fell. Let us never forget that the brightest days of a Church are those when Christ crucified is most exalted. The dens and caves of the earth, where the early Christians met to hear of the love of Jesus, were more full of glory and beauty in God's sight than ever was St. Peter's at Rome. The meanest barn at this day, where the true way of pardon is offered to sinners, is a far more honourable place than the Cathedral of Cologne or Milan. A Church is only useful so far as she exalts *free forgiveness through Christ*.

This is the doctrine which, of all others, is the mightiest engine for pulling down the kingdom of Satan. When the Kingswood colliers, near Bristol, first heard it from Whitefield's lips, they wept till their black faces were seamed with white lines of tears. The Greenlanders were unmoved so long as the Moravians told them only of the creation and the fall of man; but when they heard of redeeming love, their frozen hearts melted like snow in spring. Preach salvation by the sacraments, exalt the Church above Christ, keep back the doctrine of the Atonement, and the devil cares little. His goods are at peace. But preach a full Christ and a free pardon, and justification by faith, and then Satan will have great wrath, for he knows he has but a short time. A famous divine of the last century said that he went on preaching morality, and nothing else, till he found there was not a moral man in his parish. But when he changed his plan, and began to preach the love of Christ to sinners, then there was a stirring of the dry bones, and a mighty turning to God.

My reverend brethren, I know that these are ancient things. But in days like these it is good to be reminded of them. I am thoroughly persuaded that we want no new doctrine in order to do good to souls. We want nothing but the old paths. Walk in them steadily. Make much of Christ. Pray continually for the quickening influences of the Holy Ghost. Settle it in your minds, that where He is, nothing is impossible. Work on steadily on these lines, and you may live to see miraculous changes. The Lord God of St. Paul, the God who raised up flourishing Churches in such dark places as Rome and Corinth and Ephesus, is not dead, but alive. The blackest spiritual wilderness in the colliery districts of Lancashire may yet become a garden of the Lord.

I must now turn from these matters of special Diocesan importance in order to make a few brief remarks on some subjects of more general public interest, which appear to demand the attention of all Churchmen. They are subjects, for the most part, which have come to the surface during the last three or four years. They are subjects which ought to be considered and understood by all public-spirited Churchmen who know the times, and look beyond their own doors. About these subjects you may reasonably expect your Bishop to give his opinion.

(1) I shall speak first about the *Burials Act*.<sup>2</sup> I need not remind you that it is now the law of the land, and, as such, ought to be willingly obeyed by all loyal clergymen. I shall never conceal my own opinion, that the alleged grievance under the old law was in most parts of England entirely imaginary. In the long course of a ministry of thirty-five years in country parishes, I never met with a single case of a Dissenter who wished a deceased relative to be interred by any one but the clergyman of the parish. But I will not dwell on this. The law has been altered by the almost universal demand of the laity, and it is childish and ungracious to waste time in useless complaints. I can only counsel all clergymen who have churchyards still used for interments, and are consequently affected by the Burials Act, to allow it to work as easily and pleasantly as possible, and to avoid all friction and collision on the occasion of funerals under the Act. I advise making no difficulties about the use of the parish bier and pall, or the tolling of the bell. Even in the case of Nonconformists dying outside the parish, if their friends wish them to be buried in the parish, I advise the clergyman who consents to allow such a burial (which he is not obliged to do, and should only do occasionally, and with the consent of his churchwardens), to permit such funeral to be conducted with any Christian rights and ceremonies which he would have been obliged to permit if the deceased had died within the parish. I advise this for the sake of peace and charity, though I doubt if it could be demanded as a legal right. The only point which I cannot advise my clergy to

<sup>2</sup> Act of 1880. It removed a grievance of the Nonconformists by permitting them to bury their dead in parish churchyards with religious forms selected by themselves, or without any at all.

concede is the performance of any religious service by a Nonconformist, under the Act, within the walls of the parish church. This is a concession of principle which certainly was not contemplated in either House of Parliament. It would inevitably risk strife and confusion, and would justly give offence to many worshippers in the parish church. I fail entirely to see that the right granted by the Act to use the parish churchyard for the performance of a religious service at a funeral, carried with it the right to use the interior of the church.

For the case of persons who die unbaptized, and whose friends wish them to be buried with a religious service by the clergyman of the parish, I strongly advise my clergy to avail themselves of the provision made for such cases in the Act. I advise them to meet the natural feelings of the friends of the deceased by using a service suited to the occasion. The Prayer-book office, you are of course aware, cannot be legally used in such cases. There is, however, a very appropriate form in existence, which has been drawn up by three eminent prelates of our Church, which I shall be happy to sanction in my Diocese. Nevertheless, if any incumbent, at such funerals of unbaptized persons, likes to use a form of his own composition, I shall make no objection, though I recommend him to confine himself to collects taken from the Prayer-book and portions of Holy Scripture.

Before leaving the subject of burials I must seize the opportunity of raising a warning voice about a custom which I am informed is not uncommon in some parts of Lancashire. I refer to the custom of buying and selling what are called 'breadths of ground,' in the churchyard, for the future interment, near their relatives, of persons who are still alive. Now I am advised by good legal authorities, that all such sales of 'breadths of ground' are distinctly illegal, that no one can buy a grave for a person not yet dead without a 'faculty' from the Chancellor's Court, and that no incumbent can make a sale of such a grave which would be in the least binding on his successor. I commend this point to the attention of all incumbents who have parish churchyards. I have reason to believe that this sale of 'breadths' is a fertile source of trouble and strife. Let it then be understood that the custom is illegal, and let me request that henceforth it may be discontinued. Decency and kind feeling point out that a clergyman should direct his sexton, as far as possible, to leave a space near the grave of the husband for the grave of the wife, and, speaking generally, to provide, if it can be so managed, for members of a family being buried near one another. But all buying and selling for future interment, without a 'faculty,' is an unlawful transaction.

(2) I wish to say something, in the next place, about the *Revised Version of the New Testament*, which has justly excited so much interest during the last few months. I regard the work of the Revisers with deep thankfulness, and I believe that all English-speaking Christians ought to feel extremely grateful to them. In saying this, I ask you not to misunderstand me. I am not able to swell



the chorus of unmixed praise with which some have received the Revised Version. I cannot admit the correctness of all the new renderings of the Greek text. I think that, with an honest and conscientious desire to be strictly literal, the Revisers have sometimes made needless transpositions of words, and by so doing have not left the sense more plain. I think their English is occasionally more tame and prosaic than that of the Authorized Version, without being more faithful to the original Greek. I fail to see that in their praiseworthy effort to give the full force of the Greek article they have always been quite consistent. But, after all, this is only the opinion of one man, who may very possibly be mistaken. The things I have named are like spots in the face of the sun, and, if they are errors, they can be revised again. Taking it for all in all, the work is a great work, and deserves the thanks of all British Christians. It throws clearer light on many texts of Holy Scripture, and ought to be highly prized and diligently used by thousands.

But the main reason for thankfulness about the Revised Version, which I commend to the attention of my clergy, is the glorious testimony which it bears to the soundness of the whole doctrinal system of Christianity. After ten years of patient and diligent investigation, after careful examination of versions and manuscripts not known 250 years ago, after the united labour of the ablest committee of Biblical scholars that could be got together, after all this, the Revised Version comes forth from the crucible without the loss of a single doctrine of our most holy faith; let me rather say with every doctrine more fully established than ever. Who does not know that many of the enemies of Christianity in this land have made the alleged defects of our Authorized Version the chief ground of their attacks on the Gospel? 'Give us a new translation,' they have often cried, 'and you will see what will become of your favourite dogmas.' The Revised Version supplies a crushing answer to all these assailants. The New Testament has been translated once more by men whose competency none can dispute. And what is the result? Not a single stone in the fabric of Christian truth has been disturbed! The Trinity, the proper Deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Ghost, and the atonement, remain just where they were, and are even more clearly brought out than before. For all this, I ask you to join me in thanking, blessing, and praising God. We may boldly say, 'Thy Word is truth.' 'Thy Word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.' (John xvii. 17; Ps. cxix. 140.)

I cannot pass away from this subject without expressing a hope that none of my clergy will use the Revised Version, instead of the Authorized, in reading the lessons in Church until the practice is formally sanctioned by law. At present, however some may dispute it, the weight of evidence and opinion is most decidedly against it. Let there be no division among us on the subject. Let us not have the Diocese split into two parties—the readers of the new version and the readers of the old. 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' Let us be content at present to use the old version, which, with all its defects, has done such good

service for 250 years, until further order is taken by authority. Give the results of the revision, if you please, in your pulpits, by way of commentary. But in the reading desk I strongly advise you to use the Authorized Version.

(3) The third subject about which I propose to say a few words is *the Royal Commission* about the Ecclesiastical Courts, which has been appointed this year. This Commission, you are all aware, was asked for by the Heads of our Church, in order to meet the loudly expressed dissatisfaction of some persons with the existing Courts of First Instance and Final Appeal. It was thought only fair and reasonable to make a searching inquiry into the constitution and procedure of these Courts, to investigate the working of the Clergy Discipline<sup>3</sup> and Public Worship<sup>4</sup> Acts, and to suggest any reforms or amendments which might remove the dissatisfaction to which I have referred. The whole question is notoriously a vexed and difficult one. In every age of the Church the best mode of dealing with clerical offenders, whether in doctrinal or moral matters, has always proved a hard knot, which has baffled the cleverest fingers. Nevertheless, for the sake of peace, and in the hope of throwing oil on troubled waters, it has been thought desirable to make one more attempt. I trust this attempt will succeed. Nobody, I presume, of any school of thought, would pretend to say that our Ecclesiastical Courts, in their present state, are perfect, and incapable of improvement. What the Report of the Commission will be, of course we do not know at present. We can only wait and hope and pray that the spirit of wisdom and moderation may be given to all the Commissioners. One thing, however, I venture to say. I trust that the punishment for persistent ‘contempt of court,’ in future ecclesiastical suits, may not be imprisonment. A surer way of enlisting public sympathy on behalf of a defeated ecclesiastical litigant, however mistaken he may be, than to shut him up in prison, could not possibly be devised.

To all who are anxiously awaiting the report of the Royal Commission, let me recommend the importance of cultivating patience and moderate expectations. We must not indulge extravagant hopes. We must not expect the Commissioners to do impossibilities, and to inaugurate an era of halcyon days and perfect peace. If any one supposes that they will reverse the recent decisions on ritual, or that they will draw up a new and unmistakable Ornaments Rubric, or that they will hand over all spiritual questions to spiritual courts, in which laymen shall have no voice, or that they will allow every Bishop to settle disputed matters in his own Diocesan Court without power of appeal to a higher tribunal, or that they will not allow the laity to institute suits against criminous or heretical clergymen, or that they will suggest giving power to Convocation to alter our formularies or decide ecclesiastical questions without the license of the Crown or the sanction of Parliament, or that they will recommend a Court of

<sup>3</sup> 1840.

<sup>4</sup> 1874.

Final Appeal in spiritual questions in which Bishops and divines alone shall sit and the laity shall have no place at all, or that they will advise allowing all clergymen to do just what they please in Divine service, and even to re-introduce the Romish Mass—if any man in his senses, I say, expects any of these things from the Royal Commissioners, I venture to predict that he will find himself entirely mistaken. The Commission will not exceed its powers. Of three things I am perfectly certain. As long as the Church of England is the Established Church of this realm, the Crown will never give up its supremacy in matters ecclesiastical as well as civil, the Church will never be allowed to act independently of Parliament, and the laity of the Church will never allow the clergy alone to decide ecclesiastical disputes, or to alter the Church's formularies, or to change the Church's laws.

(4) The fourth public subject about which I wish to say a few words is the *Church Defence Institute*, to which the Archbishop of Canterbury has thought it necessary to call attention in a recent letter. The mere fact that the Primate has written this letter is enough to show the importance of the subject, and I need make no apology for taking it up. The Church Defence Institute has been called into existence in order to counteract the unhappy efforts which are being made by the Liberation Society to destroy the connection of Church and State in this country, and to disestablish and disendow the Church of England. The Archbishop recommends us to recognize the importance of the Church Defence Society, and give it our support.

It is matter for deep regret that the necessity for a Church Defence Society should have arisen. If ever there was a time in England when all Protestant Christians ought to be united and avoid quarrels, in the face of aggressive infidelity and active Popery, that time is the present. It is quite certain that disestablishment would do no good to Nonconformists, if the Liberationists could obtain it. They have liberty now to do anything they please. It is equally certain that although disestablishment and disendowment would greatly weaken our Church, and almost destroy it in rural districts, it would hardly touch its power and influence in the towns. It is equally certain that disestablishment would make a breach between Episcopalians and their Nonconformist spoilers which would never be healed. Above all, it is certain that Churchmen would not forsake the Church because she was disestablished, and become Independents, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Methodists. That grand old Communion which, compared with any other single communion in the land, is by far the largest and most influential, would still retain her old influence, and the much-coveted *equality*, of which we hear so much, would be found, after disestablishment, just as far off as ever.

To my own mind the attack of the Liberation Society on the Church of England is one of the most painful features of our time. To cultivate the most friendly relations with all Protestant Nonconformists, and to co-operate with

them whenever we can, are, in my eyes, plain and positive duties. I cannot yet believe that the violent language of extreme Liberationists expresses the sentiments of more than a minority of the Nonconformist body. Men often make up by noise what they lack in numbers. I cling to the belief that the vast majority of the Methodists, and a very large proportion of the Independents and Baptists, have no desire to disestablish and disendow the Church of England, and would rather walk in the steps of John Wesley, Adam Clarke, Doddridge, Fuller, Robert Hall, and John Cumming, and leave the Church alone.

However, if the Liberationists will not let us alone, and continue their efforts to disestablish and disendow the Church of England, it is our bounden duty to take the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to defend ourselves. We must not sit still and allow our parishes to be flooded with unscrupulous statements and grossly incorrect representations, without circulating cheap literature, adapted to the purpose, in reply. With such literature, in the shape of short tracts and leaflets, the Church Defence Institute is ready to supply us. There is no safety in apathy. If others combine, we must combine. If others agitate, we must boldly resist the agitation. If others assert falsehood, we must assert truth.

For in matters like these, we must remember, ignorance is the greatest ally the enemies of our Church possess. To dispel ignorance, and quietly replace it by truth, should be our great aim. Few persons, perhaps, who have not had occasion to look into the subject, can have the slightest conception of the ideas current among some classes about the Church, her revenues, and her clergy. Things are continually said about these subjects which are utterly untrue. For instance, it is utterly untrue that disestablishment would enable the State to save twenty-six millions of annual taxes. The whole endowments of the Church are not six millions a year! It is utterly untrue that the Bishops are rolling in wealth, and the clergy are overpaid. The Bishops have so many demands on their purses that they can hardly make both ends meet, and the clergy, if incomes were equally divided, would hardly have three hundred a year apiece! It is utterly untrue that the clergy are paid by the State, or that the people are taxed to pay the clergy: the State never gave the Church any tithes or lands at all! It is utterly untrue that the Bishops and clergy are 'State-made parsons,' seeing that the State cannot ordain any minister, and the Crown can only nominate as Bishops men who are already ordained. It is utterly untrue that the Church prayers are 'State-made prayers,' seeing that the Prayer-book was compiled by our Protestant Reformers. It is utterly untrue that the Prayer-book is a mere Popish book; considering that the greater part of it is pure Scripture. All these things are ridiculous untruths, which it is a shame for any man to circulate, and a discredit to any man to believe. I ask Englishmen, when they hear statements such as these, to exercise their own good sense, and to put the simple question, 'Is this really true?' A cause which can only be built on a foundation of gross misstatements must be in a very unsatisfactory condition.

(5) The fifth and last public subject on which I wish to say a few words is the *unsatisfactory financial position of our great Religious Societies*. By Religious Societies I mean those well-known voluntary Institutions which have been established to enable Christians to promote the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. The support given to these Societies throughout the whole Church of England appears to me far below what it ought to be. The total amount of money given annually to them is less than would be required to build a single ironclad like the *Inflexible*. And yet the support we give to agencies for promoting the spread of Christ's Gospel is a fair test of the value we set on it, and the gratitude we feel for it! Surely there is cause here for humiliation, and room for much amendment.

In our own Diocese, I am obliged to say, the state of things in this matter seems far from being right and healthy. There appear to be not a few parishes in which our great Societies receive no support at all. The following statistics are painful, and demand serious consideration. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has annual sermons in 93 Churches out of 200, and receives altogether £2,100. The Church Missionary Society has sermons in 77 Churches out of 200, and receives £4,220. The Church Pastoral Aid Society has sermons in 43 Churches out of 200, and receives £1,190. The Additional Curates' Society has sermons in 54 Churches out of 200, and receives £1,500. I lay these painful figures before you with one brief comment. I think you will all agree with me that they are not satisfactory. They are not worthy of Lancashire. They are not creditable to the Church of England in the West Derby Hundred.

I commend the above subject to the attention of the clergy of the Diocese. I am quite aware that we occupy a very exceptional position, compared to other Dioceses, and that without endowments, rates, or old charities, many of our congregations find it extremely difficult to meet the cost of organist, choir, schools, lighting, warming, the pay of officials, and other expenses of public worship. I only say that it appears to me the plain Scriptural duty of every individual Christian, and of every congregation, to do something to promote the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. It is far from my intention to prescribe to the clergy what Societies and charities they ought to bring before their parishioners. In these matters I request every clergyman to use his liberty, and act according to his own predilections. But if I am spared to hold another Visitation three years hence, I trust I shall not find a single Church in the Diocese in which there is not one Sunday given annually for collections for Missions abroad, another for Missions at home, and a third for our admirable Diocesan Institutions. There are fifty-two Sundays in every year, and I venture to think that three Sundays out of fifty-two are not too much to ask for the cause of Religious Societies. I trust the suggestion may not be forgotten.

On all the five subjects which I have just mentioned I might easily say much more, if time would allow me. I have purposely touched them very briefly, and

must leave them as seeds of thought for the private consideration of all whom I address. I now pass away from them in order to conclude my Charge with some remarks on what I believe is one of the greatest dangers by which Christianity is assailed in our day. The danger to which I refer is the widespread *decay of distinct doctrinal religion*.

Of course I do not forget that the root of the great evil which I deplore is unbelief, and that unbelief is one of the oldest diseases of human nature, and one which, in one form or another, is continually injuring the Church of Christ and ruining souls. I am not surprised at its continued existence. I expect to see it periodically appearing in some new dress, or under some new name, according as the prince of this world finds it expedient to use it for his soul-damaging work. I repeat that I always expect to see a vast amount of unbelief in this pleasure-loving, sensual, proud, money-worshipping world. I see it, and am neither surprised nor afraid.

I am not afraid, for instance, of that coarse, revived infidelity, on the lines of the men of the first French Revolution, which boldly denies the existence of God, and the reality of judgment, and a world to come; which scoffs at the Bible, and dares to place our blessed Saviour on a level with Mahomet and Tom Paine. Such unbelief will never satisfy that universal conscience of mankind, which, from ancient Egypt down to modern Australia, testifies to man's rooted belief in the reality of an unseen world. The advocates of such infidelity have never answered the broad evidence of the Bible being the Book that it is, and Christ being the Person that He was, and the effects of Christianity on the world, and the continued separate existence of the Jews. I say they have never answered this evidence, and they never will.

Nor yet again am I afraid of the veiled scepticism of some men of science, which confuses so many minds in these latter times. There are scores of highly-educated men, nowadays, you must be aware, who are constantly making statements about things in heaven and earth, about the antiquity of man, about the origin of the human race, which cannot be reconciled with the Bible, if followed to their logical conclusions. Yet those who make these statements will not allow that they are unbelievers! They seem 'willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike.'<sup>5</sup>

Of men of this sort, I repeat emphatically, we need not be afraid. When we cannot reply to their statements, and explain the difficulties they raise, we may safely sit still and wait. 'The highest philosophy in some cases,' said Faraday, 'is to keep our minds in a position of judicious suspense.' For, after all, how little do the wisest philosophers know! How extremely limited is the horizon of our minds! How many ideas of modern science are entirely hypothetical! How

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Alexander Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*.

many general conclusions are drawn most illogically from very slender particular premises! How often something has been brought to light, by the discoveries of travellers, which shivers to pieces the theories of sceptics! I say again, in this day of veiled scepticism we may quietly sit still and wait for more light. 'All human knowledge,' says Professor Rudolf Virchow 'is only fragmentary. All of us who call ourselves students of nature possess only portions of natural science.'<sup>6</sup>

What, then, is the evil of which I am afraid? I am afraid of an inward disease which appears to be growing and spreading in all the Churches of Christ throughout the world. That disease is a disposition on the part of ministers to abstain from all sharply-cut doctrine, and a distaste on the part of professing Christians for all distinct statements of dogmatic truth.

I ask your attention while I try to handle this subject for a few minutes. The disease before us is 'a pestilence which walketh in darkness,' and threatens to do immense mischief to Christ's cause, because it is not realized and understood. I wish to raise a warning voice, and to show my clergy what reason there is to watch and be on our guard. The hidden enemy within the camp is far more dangerous than the foe outside.

The evidences of this dislike to distinct doctrine of which I speak are so abundant that the only difficulty lies in selection. Unless we are men who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, we may see them on every side.

I might ask any intelligent man, for example, to mark the vague tone of some English newspapers when they touch religious subjects. He will find that while they are generally willing to praise Christian morality, they too often ignore Christian *doctrine*. I might ask him to observe the bitterness with which the advocates of School Boards have frequently spoken in the last ten years of what they are pleased to call 'theology,' and how ready they are to shovel it all aside under the vague name of '*sectarianism*.' I might ask him to analyse the most popular fictions and novels of the last forty years, which profess to paint Christians, and to notice how the portrait almost invariably avoids everything like *doctrine*, and exhibits the model Christian like a cut flower at a flower show, a mere bloom without root. I might ask him to look at the anxiety which some liberal speakers are constantly showing, in addressing popular audiences, to sweep away all '*denominational Christianity*,' and to throw aside Creeds and Confessions as old worn-out clothes, which only fetter the limbs of modern Englishmen. In each of these cases let him note one common symptom: that is, a morbid, unreasoning desire to have the fruits of Christianity without the roots, to have Christian morality without Christian doctrine. And then let him deny, if he can, that a *dislike to distinct doctrine* is a widespread evil of our times.

<sup>6</sup> *Freedom of Science*, p. 20.

I will then ask any intelligent man to examine the opinions commonly expressed in the talk of private life. You have only to bring up the subject of religion in society, and you will get further proofs still. In many houses, even houses where people make a decent profession of religion, you will find that they make an idol of '*earnestness*.' They do not pretend to know anything about controversies and disputed questions, or to have any opinion as to who is right and who is wrong. They only know that they admire 'earnestness'; and they cannot think that earnest, hard-working ministers can be unsound in the faith. Tell them that any 'earnest,' clever, eloquent clergyman whom they name does not preach the Gospel, and they are downright offended. Impossible! Whatever doctrines an 'earnest' man holds and teaches, they think it narrow and uncharitable and illiberal in you to distrust him. In vain you remind them that zeal and laboriousness are useless, if a minister does not teach Scriptural truth; and that Pharisees and Jesuits had zeal enough to 'compass sea and land.' They know nothing about that: they do not profess to argue! All they know is that work is work; and that an *earnest man must be a good man*, and cannot be in the wrong, whatever he teaches. And what does it all come to? They dislike distinct doctrine, and will not make up their minds as to what is truth.

Hitherto we have only seen the evil I am considering in solution, and in its most common and diluted forms. If we want to see it in its more solid and crystallized state, we have only to turn to the preaching and writings of a small but well-known school of *Churchmen* of our days. I will not weary you with a catalogue of the strange and loose utterances which come incessantly from this quarter about inspiration, about the atonement, about the sacrifice and death of Christ, about the incarnation, about miracles, about Satan, about the Holy Spirit, about future punishment. I will not shock you by quoting language frequently used about the Bible by men who seem to regard it as nothing better than an obsolete record of useless mythology, in which you may here and there pick up a few globules of truth. I will not pain you by recounting the astounding theories sometimes propounded about 'the blood of Christ.' Time would fail me if I tried to sketch the leading features of a misty system which appears to regard all religions as more or less true, and in which 'tabernacles' seem to be wanted for Socrates and Plato and Pythagoras and Seneca and Confucius and Mahomet and Channing and Theodore Parker, as well as for Christ and Moses and Elias, all, forsooth, being true prophets, great masters, great teachers, great leaders of thought! I shall content myself with the remark, that *dislike of distinct doctrine* is one prominent characteristic of the leaders and champions of the party to which I refer. Search their sermons and books, and you find plenty of excellent negatives, plenty of great swelling words about 'the fatherhood of God, and charity and light and courage and manliness and large-heartedness and wide views and free thought,'; plenty of mere wind-bags, high-sounding abstract terms, such as 'the true and the just and the beautiful and the high-souled and



the genial and the liberal,' and so forth. But, alas! there is an utter absence of distinct, solid, positive doctrine. And if you look for a clear systematic account of the way of pardon and peace with God, of the right medicine for a burdened conscience, and the true cure for a broken heart, of faith and assurance and justification and regeneration and sanctification, you look in vain. The words indeed you may sometimes find, but not the realities; the words in new and strange senses, fair and good-looking outside, like rotten fruits; but, like them, empty and worthless within. But one thing, I repeat, is abundantly clear: positive doctrinal statements are the abomination of a certain class of Christian teachers in this day.

The consequences of this widespread *dislike to distinct doctrine* are very serious. Whether we like to allow it or not, it is an epidemic which is just now doing great harm, and specially among young people. It creates, fosters, and keeps up an immense amount of instability in religion. It produces what I must venture to call, if I may coin the phrase, a 'jelly-fish' Christianity in the land: that is, a Christianity without bone, or muscle, or power. A jelly-fish, as every one knows who has been much by the seaside, is a pretty and graceful object when it floats in the sea, contracting and expanding like a little delicate transparent umbrella. Yet the same jelly-fish, when cast on the shore, is a mere helpless lump, without capacity for movement, self-defence, or self-preservation. Alas! it is a vivid type of much of the religion of this day, of which the leading principle is—'No dogma, no distinct tenets, no positive doctrine.' We have hundreds of ministers, both inside and outside the Church of England, who seem not to have a single bone in their body of divinity. They have no definite opinions; they belong to no school or party; they are so afraid of 'extreme views,' that they have no views at all. We have thousands of sermons preached every year, which are without an edge or a point or a corner, smooth as ivory balls, awakening no sinner, and edifying no saint. We have legions of young men annually turned out from our Universities, armed with a few scraps of second-hand philosophy, who think it a mark of cleverness and intellect to have no decided opinions about anything in religion, and to be utterly unable to make up their minds as to what is Christian truth. They live apparently in a state of suspense, like Mahomet's fabled coffin, hanging between heaven and earth. Their high souls are not satisfied with arguments which satisfied Butler, and Paley, and Chalmers, and M'Ilvaine, and Whately, and Whewell, and Mozley. Their only creed is a kind of 'Nihilism.'<sup>7</sup> They are sure and positive about nothing. And last, and worst of all, we have myriads of worshippers, respectable church-going people, who have no distinct and definite views about any point in theology. They cannot discern things that differ, any more than colour-blind people

<sup>7</sup> 'Nihilism' (Latin nihil: nothing): a name given by the novelist Turgenev to an extreme form of Socialism, the prelude to Bolshevism, which was very active in Russia in the 1870s.

can distinguish colours. They think everybody is right and nobody wrong, everything is true and nothing is false, all sermons are good and none are bad, every clergyman is sound and no clergyman unsound. They are 'tossed to and fro, like children, by every wind of doctrine;' often carried away by some new excitement and sensational movement; ever ready for new things, because they have no firm grasp on the old; and utterly unable to 'render a reason of the hope that is in them.' All this, and much more, of which I cannot now speak particularly, is the result of that unhappy *dread of distinct doctrine* which has been so strongly developed, and has laid such hold on many churchmen, in these latter days.

I turn from the picture I have exhibited with a sorrowful heart. I grant it is a gloomy one; but I am afraid it is only too accurate and true. Let us not deceive ourselves. Distinct and positive doctrine is at a discount just now. Instability and unsettled notions are the natural result, and meet us in every direction. Cleverness and earnestness are the favourite idols of the age. *What* a man says matters nothing, however strange and heterogeneous are the opinions he expresses! If he is only brilliant and 'earnest,' he cannot be wrong! Never was it so important for laymen to hold systematic views of truth, and for ordained ministers to 'enunciate doctrine' very clearly and distinctly in their teaching.

After all, have Churchmen any reason to be ashamed of distinct doctrinal statements? Is the wisdom of the nineteenth century so great that we ought to dispense with sharply-cut truth? Is the good old Church of England a dogmatic Church or not? I answer these questions without hesitation. In spite of all the hard words poured on 'dogma' as effete, worn out, injurious to free thought, unsuited to the nineteenth century, and so forth, there remains a catena of acts in support of 'dogma,' which I believe it is impossible to explain away. In short, there is a mass of evidence which cannot be refuted.

(1) First and foremost, we can turn boldly to our Thirty-nine Articles. Is distinct doctrine there or not? I do not forget that many think very little of that admirable Confession of Faith. Some coolly say that 'nobody really believes all the Articles.' Some tell us plainly that they regard the Thirty-nine Articles as a burdensome stone, and an incubus on men's consciences, and that we should do far better to abolish them, throw them overboard, and be content with subscription to the Apostles' Creed. But all this time the law of the land, and of the Church, stands firm and unrepealed, and every incumbent on taking possession of a living is obliged to declare publicly that he will teach and preach 'nothing contrary to the Thirty-nine Articles.' Yet what are these Articles but a wise compendium of dogmatical statements? With few exceptions they are a series of doctrinal assertions, *carefully drawn out of Scripture*, which the Church regards as of special and primary importance. Where, I should like to know, is our honesty, if we shrink from 'enunciating dogma' after pledging ourselves to the Articles? Where is plain faithfulness to our ministerial engagements if we do not

teach and preach distinct, systematic doctrine? As for those clergymen who hold livings, and retain positions in our Church, while they openly contradict the Articles, or deliberately sneer at their statements of doctrine as 'narrow, and illiberal, and unsuited to the nineteenth century,' I can only say that their conduct is most inconsistent and unsatisfactory. I can admire their zeal and cleverness; but I cannot see that they are in their right place in the pulpit of the Church of England. He that is for no distinct doctrine, no Articles, and no Creeds, in my judgment is no true and loyal Churchman.

(2) In the second place, we can turn boldly to the Prayer-book. Is distinct doctrine there or not? That famous book, with all its unquestionable imperfections, finds favour in the eyes of all schools of thought within our pale, and of myriads outside. You rarely meet with any one, however broad and liberal, however inimical to Creeds and Articles, who quarrels with our time-honoured Liturgy, or would like to see it much altered. Week after week its old familiar words are read all over the globe, wherever the English flag flies, and the English language is spoken. The older the world grows, the more men seem disposed to say, with George Herbert on his death-bed, 'The prayers of my mother, the Church of England, there are none equal to them!' Yet all this time it is a curious fact that an immense amount of dogmatic theology runs through the Prayer-book, and underlies its simple petitions. He that sits down and makes a list, will be surprised to find what a large amount of doctrinal statements the old book contains about the Trinity, about the proper Deity of Christ, about the personality of the Holy Ghost, about the sacrifice and mediation of Christ, about the work of the Spirit, and many other points. They occur again and again in sentences with which we are so familiar that we overlook their contents. Take, for a single instance, the doctrine of eternal punishment. The question has been raised of late whether the Church of England says anything about it in her formularies. Yet all this time the Prayer-book contains three singularly strong expressions on the subject. In the *Litany* one of the first petitions is, 'From everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us.' In the *Burial Service* we say, by the side of the open grave, 'Deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.' Even in the *Church Catechism* we teach children that in the Lord's Prayer they ask to be 'kept from our ghostly enemy and everlasting death.' Once more I say, he that thinks little of distinct doctrine, and yet uses the Prayer-book of the Church of England, is very inconsistent, and is occupying, whether he knows it or not, a most untenable and unreasonable position. I assert, confidently, that the Prayer-book is full of dogmatic theology.

(3) Let us turn, in the third place, to the whole history of the progress and propagation of the Gospel from the time of the Apostles down to the present day. I affirm, unhesitatingly, that there never has been any spread of the Gospel, any conversion of nations or countries, any successful evangelistic work, ex-

cepting by the ‘enunciation of distinct doctrine.’ I invite any opponent of dogmatic theology to name a single instance of a country, or town, or people, which has ever been Christianized by merely telling men that ‘Christ was a great moral Teacher, that they must love one another, that they must be true and just and unselfish and generous and brotherly and high-souled,’ and the like! No! no! no! Not one single victory can such teaching show us: not one trophy can such teaching exhibit. It has wrought no deliverance on the earth. The victories of Christianity, wherever they have been won, have been won by distinct doctrinal theology; by telling men of Christ’s vicarious death and sacrifice; by showing them Christ’s substitution on the cross, and His precious blood; by teaching them justification by faith, and bidding them believe on a crucified Saviour; by preaching ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Spirit; by lifting up the brazen serpent; by telling men to look and live—to believe, repent, and be converted. This, this is the only teaching which for eighteen centuries God has honoured with success, and is honouring at the present day both at home and abroad. Let the clever advocates of a broad and undogmatic theology, the preachers of the Gospel of earnestness and sincerity and cold morality, show us at this day any English village or parish or city or district, which has been evangelized, without distinct doctrinal teaching, by their principles. They cannot do it, and they never will. Christianity without dogma is a powerless thing. It may be beautiful to some minds, but it is childless and barren. There is no getting over facts. The good that is done in the earth may be comparatively small. Evil may abound, and ignorant impatience may murmur and cry out that Christianity has failed. But, we may depend on it, if we want to do good and shake the world, we must fight with the old apostolic weapons, and stick to ‘distinct doctrine.’ No dogma, no fruits! No positive doctrine, no evangelization!

(4) In the last place, let us turn to the death-beds of all who die with solid comfort and good hope, and appeal to them. There are few of us who are not called on occasionally, as we travel through life, to see people passing through the valley of the shadow of death, and drawing near to their latter end, and to those ‘things unseen which are eternal.’ We all of us know what a vast difference there is in the manner in which such people leave the world, and the amount of comfort and hope which they seem to feel. Can any of us say that he ever saw a person die in peace who did not know distinctly what he was resting on for acceptance with God, and could only say, in reply to inquiries, that he was ‘earnest and sincere’? I can only give my own experience: I never saw one! Oh, no! The story of Christ’s moral teaching and self-sacrifice and example, and the need of being ‘earnest’ and sincere, and like Him, will never smooth down a dying pillow. Christ the teacher, Christ the great pattern, Christ the prophet, will not suffice. We want something more than this! We want the story of Christ dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. We want Christ the

mediator, Christ the substitute, Christ the intercessor, Christ the redeemer, in order to meet with confidence the King of terrors, and to say, 'Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?' Not a few, I believe, who have gloried all their lives in rejecting doctrinal religion, have discovered at last that their 'broad theology' is a miserable comforter, and the Gospel of mere 'earnestness' is no good news at all. Not a few, I firmly believe, could be named, who at the eleventh hour have cast aside their favourite, new-fashioned views, and have fled for refuge to 'the precious blood,' and left the world with no other hope than the old-fashioned doctrine of faith in a crucified Jesus. Nothing in their life's religion has given them such peace as the simple truth grasped at the eleventh hour—

Just as I am: without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee—  
O Lamb of God, I come.

Surely when this is the case, we have no need to be ashamed of doctrinal theology.

And now, as I leave the subject, let me wind up all I have said with an expression of my earnest hope that all who wish to be honest, true-hearted clergymen in the Diocese of Liverpool will hold fast their Creeds and Articles, will walk in the steps of their forefathers, and stick to the old weapons which they wielded so well and successfully. Let no scorn of the world, let no ridicule of smart writers, let no sneers of liberal critics, let no secret desire to please and conciliate the public, tempt us for one moment to leave the old paths, and drop the old practice of enunciating doctrine—clear, distinct, well-defined and sharply-cut doctrine—in all our utterances and teachings. Let us beware of being vague, and foggy, and hazy in our statements. Let us be specially distinct and clear about such points as original sin, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, the finished work of Christ, the complete atonement made by His death, the priestly office which He exercises at the right hand of God, the inward work of the Holy Ghost on hearts, the reality and eternity of future punishment. On all these points let our testimony be not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen; and let the tone of our witness be plain, ringing, and unmistakable. 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?' (1 Cor. xiv. 8.) If we handle such subjects in a timid, faltering, half-hearted way, as if we were handling hot iron, and we had not made up our minds as to what is truth, it is vain to expect people who hear us to believe anything at all.

Let me conclude this Charge with two special words of warning. They are warnings so closely connected with my subject that I dare not keep them back. They are cautions for the times.

(1) On the one hand, I desire to raise a warning voice against the *growing disposition to sacrifice dogma on the altar of so-called unity*, and to give up distinct doctrine for the sake of peace and cooperation. The tide is running strongly in this direction: we must mind what we are about. Peace and unity are excellent things, but they may be bought too dear. And they are bought too dear if we keep back any portion of Gospel truth, in order to exhibit to men a hollow semblance of agreement. The divisions of the Church of England are unhappy and dangerous. They are the strength of Liberationism and the laughing-stock of the world. They are an evil omen. God sees them, and is displeased. When children fight about the candle they are often left in the dark. But for Christ's sake let us beware of trying to heal our breaches by lowering our standard of doctrine, and watering our statements of truth in order to avoid giving offence. To skin over a wound externally while mischief is going on inside, is poor surgery, and not a cure. Let our principle be, "*Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis arnica veritas.*"<sup>8</sup> Let us be kind and courteous to every one, however much we may disagree with him. Let us not forget Luther's maxim: "*In quo aliquid Christi video, illum diligo.*"<sup>9</sup> But never, never let us compromise and give up one jot or tittle of doctrinal truth. Let us boldly 'declare all the counsel of God.'

Well says Martin Luther: 'Accursed is that charity which is preserved by the shipwreck of faith or truth, to which all things must give place; whether charity, or an apostle, or an angel from heaven.' Well says Dr. Gauden: 'If either peace or truth must be dispensed with, it is peace and not truth. Better to have truth without public peace than peace without saving truth.' Well says Gregory Nazianzen: 'That man little consults the will and honour of God, who will expose the truth in order to obtain the repute of an easy mildness.'<sup>10</sup>

(2) On the other hand, at the same time, I desire to raise a warning voice against *the growing tendency to be dogmatical about things which are not necessary to salvation*, to be positive where the Bible is silent, to condemn and anathematize those whom God has not condemned, and to exalt things indifferent and secondary to a level with the primary verities and weightier matters of the Gospel. By all means let us be bold, firm, and unbending as steel, about every jot and tittle of Christ's truth; but let us not cultivate the detestable habit of excommunicating every man who does not see everything, in the 'adiaphora' of worship, exactly with our eyes, who does not support our favourite Societies, who does not conduct his services precisely as we do, who does not work his parish exactly on our lines. Let us always remember it is possible to be too narrow as well as too broad. For Christ's sake let us make allowances for slight

<sup>8</sup> 'Dear to me is Socrates, dear to me is Plato, but truth is dearer still'.

<sup>9</sup> 'I highly esteem him in whom I see anything of Christ'.

<sup>10</sup> *Morning Exercises*, vol. IV, p. 221.

varieties of opinion in non-essential matters. Let us not out-ritualize those who are called ritualists in over-scrupulousness and particularity. Let us not squabble about straws when the Canaanite and Perizzite are in the land, or bite and devour one another, like the wretched Jewish factions in the siege of Jerusalem, when the Romans were thundering at the gates. Never, never, I am persuaded, was the old saying of Rupertus Meldenius so worthy of daily remembrance: *'In necessariis sit unitas; in non necessariis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas'* In the necessary things of religion let there be unity; in things not necessary, liberty; in all things, charity.