

CHARGES AND ADDRESSES

to the Diocese of Liverpool,

by

the Right Reverend Bishop of Liverpool,

John Charles Ryle, D.D.,

Published 1903AD

Our Diocese, our Church, our Times.*

Reverend and Lay Brethren, We are opening this day our Eighth Diocesan Conference, and I offer you a hearty welcome. I trust that our proceedings may be not less useful and interesting than those of preceding meetings. It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact, that no Conference ever attracts the attention of more than a limited number of Churchmen in a Diocese. It must needs be so. So long as a Conference is a voluntary institution, devoid of legal powers, and unable to enforce its resolutions, so long the great majority of Churchmen will take little notice of its debates and discussions. Here in Liverpool we are no worse off than other Dioceses. Indeed, a careful review of the last seven years lands me to the conclusion, that both in the numbers attending, and in the selection of interesting subjects, our Conference is second to none, and in the handling of our subjects by our readers and speakers we have no cause to be ashamed of our platform.

Since we met last year, as you all know, a heavy blow has fallen on my household,† after three years of ceaseless anxiety, which obliges me to consider very seriously my position as your Bishop, and to speak plainly to you about it. It is needless to remind you that I have reached an age when a man's 'natural force is abated,' and he can no longer do the things that he used to do. At such an age such a loss as that which I was called, in the wise providence of God, to sustain last April, must needs tell on any one with peculiar power, and I am conscious that it has told on me. In short, I feel the time cannot be very far distant when the work of this Diocese will oblige me either to resign my office, or to obtain the aid of a Suffragan. I will not plead guilty

* An address given at the opening of the eighth Liverpool Diocesan Conference, 1889.

† [His wife died in April 1889.]

to laziness or love of ease, and if I know my own heart I had rather die in harness than let business fall into arrear, and would rather wear out than rust out. But the oversight of 1,200,000 Lancashire souls, and of a huge city like Liverpool, is no sinecure at the end of this busy nineteenth century. I cannot help sometimes feeling that it needs a younger and more vigorous hand than mine. However, you must understand distinctly that I have not made up my mind, and have formed no decision. God may have something more for me to do. Time, as it rolls on, will open up the path of duty. I only ask you to remember that I know my position, and that I am anxious to do what is best for myself, for yourselves, and for the Church of England in the Diocese of Liverpool, if necessity arises.

I cannot turn away from this subject without expressing my deep thankfulness for the boundless sympathy exhibited towards me in my dark hour of trouble last April, from every part of my Diocese, by all ranks and classes, by all schools of thought among my clergy, by all sorts and conditions of men. Once for all, let me say that it cheered me, sustained me, and raised my estimate of human nature. I received it as a great 'cup of cold water,' which will have its reward. I was grateful: I am grateful: I shall be grateful to my dying day.

Before handling a few points of interest, which I wish to touch briefly, about the condition of our own Diocese and the Church of England in 1889, I wish to say a few words about the arrangements of our Conference, which a slight friction at the close of last year's proceedings seems to make desirable.

An impression appears to exist in some quarters that a Diocesan Conference is an assembly at which any one may get up, at any moment, without any previous notice, and propose a resolution on any subject that he pleases. I think a little reflection will show that such a mode of procedure would never work well. It would risk the possible sacrifice of our two short meeting days to the discussion of trivial, useless, or violently controversial subjects. I can see no better plan than that which we have adopted; the plan, I mean, of requiring all resolutions to be sent to our Standing Committee, to be accepted or otherwise as it seems expedient. I can affirm most emphatically that this Committee acts most fairly and impartially, and has not the least desire to burke the discussion of any reasonable subjects. But the Committee is a trustee for the best disposal of the very limited time of the Conference, and a certain discretion must be allowed to it in arranging our annual proceedings. Even the House of Commons, which sits for six or seven months, not for two days, never allows any resolution or question to be brought forward without previous notice. I think the Liverpool Diocesan Conference may well be content to follow its example.

I. Concerning *the state of things in our own Diocese*, I have a few remarks to make on certain important points, which I will try to place before you as briefly as possible.

(1) Our great cathedral scheme makes no progress. It is on the shelf and sleeps for the present. I say ‘sleeps’ advisedly: it is not dead, I hope, but sleeps. I admit frankly that the position of the scheme is rather humbling after such a large expenditure of time, talk, controversy, and not a little money, on the subject. I am not surprised that Churchmen at a distance, who do not understand Liverpool, speak rather scornfully of us. But there is no fighting against facts. To purchase and clear a good central site, which all would approve, in a city where land is of fabulous price; to build a cathedral worthy of the second city in the empire; to provide a suitable endowment for a dean, canons, and official staff, beside daily expenses—all this would cost at least half a million of money. Will any one tell me that it is likely such a sum of money will ever be raised under any Bishop of Liverpool, whether High, Low, or Broad? Nothing, of course, is impossible. Some Lancashire Vanderbilt, or Astor, or Jay Gould, may yet come forward, and put down half a million at once. I only speak of what is likely and probable. The financial experience of the comparatively small Cathedral of Truro, and of the London Church House, and of the difficulty of endowing all new bishoprics, is not very encouraging. Moreover, many new churches are wanted in our Diocese. Many, like our late friend Charles Groves, think that churches are necessities and cathedrals only luxuries. Some of our wealthiest and most liberal and kind-hearted inhabitants are not Churchmen, and cannot of course be expected to help to build a cathedral. All these are great broad facts which cannot be overturned. In the face of these facts I am totally unmoved by the inconsiderate remarks of outside critics about our want of a cathedral. I am not surprised that the scheme sleeps.

(2) The building that I believe our Diocese needs most at this moment is a Church House in some central position in Liverpool. By this I do not mean a grand ornamental structure, but a plain, commodious building, designed for usefulness rather than display. Such a House should contain the Diocesan Registry and suitable offices for the Registrar, making us independent of Chester. It should contain a business-room for the Bishop, for interviews, licensing, and, if necessary, for institutions, with a waiting-room and a room for a secretary. It should contain the offices of the Diocesan Finance Associations, the Scripture Readers’ Society, the Church of England Temperance Society, and the Sunday School Society. It should contain a good-sized airy room, or even two rooms, for committees, and for a Consistory Court. It should contain a reading-room large enough to receive the nucleus of a diocesan library of theology, which it is useless to talk of now, and provided with every convenience for writing. The cost of such a Church House, if we were

content with an inexpensive site, ought probably not to exceed £20,000, and the benefit it would confer on the Diocese, I venture boldly to think, would be far greater than any cathedral. The annual rent of our various offices in Commerce Court and elsewhere at this moment is a far larger sum than most people suppose. If God should not put it into the heart of some wealthy Churchman to come forward and help us, I sometimes think a Syndicate might find it a good investment to build such a Church House as I have described, and let us hire it at a fixed rent until we can purchase it by a sinking fund.

(3) Church-building, I am thankful to say, continues to make very satisfactory progress. St. Dunstan's at the south end of Liverpool, and St. Leonard's at the north, are gratifying proofs that the generation of large-hearted, generous lay Churchmen is not yet extinct in Liverpool. Mr. Harrison's church at Stanley, and Mrs. Turner's at St. Chrysostom's, Everton, are rapidly following the two I have already mentioned. New churches have also been commenced at Formby, at St. Peter's, Warrington, at Haydock, at North Meols, and St. James's, Birkdale. St. Lawrence, Kirkdale, and St. Philip, Sheil Road, are ready for consecration, but are still, unhappily, waiting for an endowment and repair fund. In the new districts of St. Matthew, Bootle, St. Luke, and St. Simon and St. Jude, Walton, we have still nothing but temporary places of worship, quite inadequate to the wants of the population. In each of these three districts I trust we shall at no distant date see a permanent church. Another new church seems greatly needed in Kensington Fields, and I heartily wish some one would take up its erection. However, I have said enough to show that church-building in our new Diocese has not yet come to a standstill. Small as the area of our Diocese is compared to Manchester, at least thirty new churches will be added to it in the first ten years of its separate existence.

(4) The annual increase of Mission Rooms, or Church Rooms, is another most satisfactory item in the condition of our Diocese. The rooms already built at St. Nathaniel's, St. Michael-in-the-Hamlet, St. Cleopas, Litherland, Hindley, Grassendale, Roby, Skelmersdale, and Christ Church, Everton, and being built at St. James's Toxteth, and St. Cyprian, Edge Hill, will greatly strengthen the hands of the incumbents in the parishes I have named. I repeat my formerly expressed opinion, that the value of these rooms cannot easily be overrated. They enable a clergyman to give short, elementary, non-liturgical services, such as the Apostles used to hold. They enable him to obtain the help of gifted and qualified laymen to hold such services, when he cannot hold them himself. Both these things are impossible in consecrated churches by reason of the Act of Uniformity. They can be built at a quarter of the expense of a regular church, while at present the financial condition of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners makes it useless to build any church in a poor

district, unless some one comes forward to provide an endowment. Above all, they meet the wants of a large body of our working classes, who now go nowhere at all, and certainly will seldom begin their religious life by going to a long liturgical service which they cannot understand. The objection sometimes made that mission-room services do not lead people to Church, and only increase Dissent, I do not admit to be valid. Even if it was, I had much rather see people going to mission rooms than going nowhere at all. The plain truth is, that a miserable cast-iron want of elasticity has long been the bane of the Establishment. A great Church like ours ought never to be ashamed to meet the wants of all sorts and conditions of men, and to provide true scriptural means of grace, of one kind or another, for every rank and class of the community. I will leave this subject with one particular hint to the promoters of mission rooms. That hint is to be very careful about the terms of their *trust-deeds*, and to see that they are drawn up with an eye to the future, and a wise provision against possible contingencies. Neglect on this point may be the cause of much future trouble.

(5) The Commission of Inquiry which I appointed last Conference, in consequence of a resolution moved by our friend the present Dean of Norwich, is likely to prove very useful. Its Report will supply us with a manual of information about the ‘things that are wanting’ in our Diocese. Accurate statistics are the first steps towards reforms, and such statistics the Report of the Commission will provide. There are facts about the city of Liverpool, containing more than half the population of the Diocese, of a most extraordinary kind, crying loudly for a change, of which few people are aware.

It is a fact that there are some large and important churches here which have no regular districts attached to them. Their incumbents are not legally responsible for any pastoral work, and they do what they do voluntarily and by conventional arrangement. I will instance St. Luke; St. Andrew; St. Mary, Edge Hill; St. Michael-in-the-Hamlet; St. Mary, Bootle; and Walton Breck.

It is a fact that there are districts which nominally belong to the Rectors of Walton, West Derby, and Liverpool, which lie at such a distance from the Mother Church that they are practically ‘no man’s land.’ Walton, for example, embraces both St. Mary, Bootle, and St. Michael-in-the-Hamlet.

It is a fact that there is more than one church which, by the absorption of shops into warehouses, the opening up of new streets, and the consequent diminution of population, is no longer wanted, and ought to be taken down and rebuilt elsewhere.

It is a fact that there are some parishes in Liverpool, and specially at the north end, with large populations of eight, ten, or twelve thousand souls, in which, at first sight, new churches are greatly wanted. But inquiry will show that in these parishes three-fourths or four-fifths of the inhabitants are Roman Catholics, and that at present more churches are not wanted.

It is a fact, on the other side, that there are many districts, both in Liverpool and in Wigan, Warrington, St. Helen's, Widnes, and Pemberton, where the number of professing Churchmen is far greater than one incumbent can look after, and there is a grievous want of more means of grace and more pastoral superintendence, if the Established Church is really to keep her position as 'the Church of the people.'

On all these points I believe our Commission will throw a searching light, and lead to useful results. At present I am afraid many people in our Diocese are living without any spiritual visitation either from clergymen or nonconformist ministers, and die and are buried without a word being said to them about their souls. This last evil, no doubt, could be met by Christian liberality and evangelization. The evils mentioned earlier can only be reached by a special Act of Parliament. To speak plainly, we want a 'Permissive Act for the City of Liverpool,' giving power to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, with the consent of the Bishop, the patrons, and the incumbents, and with a due regard to vested interests, to assign legal districts to every church in Liverpool, Walton, and West Derby; to annex neglected districts to the nearest church; to pull down and remove churches no longer wanted; and to provide for the ultimate extinction of the present liberty to be married at a distance from the district in which the parties reside and are known, and the ultimate settlement of the question of marriage fees. None of these things can be done without an Act of Parliament. Dean Lefroy's Committee has no power whatsoever to do them, and can only report and recommend. But if its Report only shows the things that are wanting, sets Liverpool Churchmen thinking, and finally leads up to such a Permissive Act of Parliament as I have tried to describe, the Committee will have done good service, and I publicly give its members my thanks for the trouble they have taken.

Into the contents of the Report it is impossible for me to enter now. It is a long, full, and exhaustive document, which requires careful reading. I propose to send a copy to every incumbent in the Diocese, and to many leading lay Churchmen. There are, however, a few remarkable facts which I will bring before the Conference at once.

(i) The Report shows that the population of our Diocese just now is about 1,203,000, and that of this number 261,000 are Romanists and 257,000 Non-conformists, leaving 663,000 to the Church of England.

(ii) The Report shows that for this 663,000 the Church of England at present provides 196,000 seats (162,000 in churches and 34,000 in mission rooms).

(iii) The Report shows that of these 196,000 seats no less than 144,000 are free, and only 52,000 rented.

(iv) The Report shows that during the nine years since the Diocese was formed, twenty-six new churches have been built and consecrated, three new

chancels have been built, four churches have been built and are not yet consecrated, and seven new churches are being built at this moment.

(v) The Report shows that beside the 199 consecrated churches in the Diocese, there are no less than 198 mission rooms used for public worship.

(vi) Finally the Report shows that nothing is more wanted in the Diocese than a Sustentation Fund for the assistance of the clergy in poor parishes, when the living is either insufficiently endowed or has no endowment at all. Such Sustentation Fund might easily be grafted on our valuable Benefices Augmentation Institution.

These six points I commend to your special attention, when the Report comes into your hands.

For the many figures in the Report nothing more can fairly be claimed than approximate correctness. I understand that the returns from some quarters are rather imperfect and defective. But I believe every effort has been made to secure general accuracy.

(6) The last point in the state of our own particular Diocese which I must touch is the well-worn subject of our Diocesan Institutions. I will not weary you with many words about them. They hold their own position, I am glad to say; but I repeat emphatically that they receive far less pecuniary support than they deserve, and consequently do far less than they ought to do. It is much the same, I am told, in most Dioceses. People will not give to central common funds, but to objects under their own eyes, and close to their own doors. To suppose, as some unfriendly critics say, that the income of our Diocesan Institutions represents all the money given annually for church purposes in our Diocese, is simply ridiculous. I have good reason to know that tens of thousands of pounds are given every year to the cause of Christ within the boundaries of the West Derby Hundred, which the public never hears of, and which never passes through our office in Commerce Court. I hope for better days. I can only repeat my old opinion, that the Diocesan Institutions, the Scripture Readers' Society, and the Bible Women's Society, ought to receive five times as much money as they do now. Their present financial condition reflects little credit on the Churchmen of Liverpool.

II. Concerning *the general state of things in the whole Church of England at the present day*, I shall now, as usual, make a few remarks. You have a right to know what your own Bishop thinks about many important topics which are annually cropping up and attracting notice, and I think it a plain duty to speak about them without reserve.

It goes without saying that there are many *bright points* on our ecclesiastical horizon which our forefathers never saw or dreamed of a hundred years ago, and much good going on among all schools of thought which it would be dishonest and ungrateful not to acknowledge. Our worst enemies must admit that the Established Church is no longer asleep but awake, and that

there is a spirit of stir and activity in our ranks from one end of the land to the other. Bishops, presbyters, deacons, deans, canons, and rural deans, are all doing ten times as much work as they did last century. The drones in the Anglican hive are a diminishing quantity, and may some day become an extinct species, like the dodo.

The creation and endowment in the last fifty years of seven new Dioceses at home and of seventy in the Colonies; the expenditure of some thirty millions of money in building and restoring churches; the immense increase of contributions to Missionary Societies both for foreign and home objects; the popular services in our long neglected cathedrals; the training colleges for candidates for holy orders and for teachers; the thousands of Church schools built in every Diocese; the creation of Congresses and Conferences; the revival of Convocation; the organized aggressive evangelization by special missions; the efforts made to provide for the spiritual wants of soldiers, sailors, emigrants, and young men and women; the largely multiplied administration of the Lord's Supper, and the greater attention to confirmation—all these are broad facts in the history of the Anglican Church of the nineteenth century which he who runs may read. Whether for good or for evil, there is movement everywhere.

However, not everything new is good. Some of the proposals of the zealous friends of progress in the present day appear to me of rather doubtful expediency. Zeal for reforms and for the amendment of defects is an excellent thing no doubt. But there is such a thing as a 'zeal not according to knowledge,' and certain schemes and plans of improvement which have been lately put forward by well-meaning Churchmen, and are now being discussed, appear to my eyes to be of that kind of zeal. I will name a few of them, and tell you what I think.

(1) I doubt the wisdom of that large increase of Dioceses which some desire, who talk of doubling or trebling the number of our Bishops. You may go too far in that direction, and destroy the independence of incumbents by a grandmotherly kind of system, under which Rectors and Vicars would never be let alone. There is a limit to the number of new Dioceses required. You may have them too small as well as too large. You may be over-officered and over-bishoped. One worthy reformer, for instance, has coolly proposed to cut our own Diocese into two, and to have one Bishop for the city of Liverpool, and another for the districts outside. This I call riding a good idea to death. A Bishop in the nineteenth century, with railways, telegraphs, the printing press, and the penny post, can do a hundred times as much work as a Bishop in the Primitive Church ever did.

(2) I doubt the wisdom of the frequent proposals to extend and enlarge the diaconate, and to confer holy orders on a lower order of men. The plan, if adopted, would lower the standard of ministerial qualifications. To this I

am entirely opposed. I speak after the experience of nine years' ordinations, and I say that the standard is quite low enough already. It would never answer to have two sorts of deacons side by side. The thing needed is to bring forward the laity. There is a rich mine of strength in that quarter, which has been far too much neglected hitherto by the Church of England.

(3) I doubt the wisdom of the attempt to add anything to our Church Catechism, in order to provide more definite teaching about the Church. A more ingenious addition to our unhappy strifes, controversies, and bones of contention, I cannot conceive. He that supposes Canterbury and York Convocations could ever draw up a set of questions for children about the Church, which all Churchmen would accept and approve, must have a very strange view of human nature in England.

(4) I doubt the wisdom of the proposed 'Draft Prayer Book Bill about Additional Services and Rubrics.' The object of that Bill appears to be to enable certain ecclesiastical measures to be got through Parliament without discussion, if, after 'lying on the table' for forty days, no objection to them is raised. I must say that this appears to me a 'very large order,' and fraught with danger. I question whether any reformed House of Commons would ever allow any measure affecting the Established Church to be withdrawn from its consideration. I question the prudence of talking about a Bill to alter or add rubrics. That expression may mean a very great deal of mischief. The words of Lord Cross about this Bill at the recent Carlisle Conference are worth notice. He said that if the advocates of this measure 'meant to interfere with doctrine and ritual, they would pull the Church about their ears.'

(5) About another recent proposal I not only doubt the wisdom, but have the strongest objection to it. That proposal is to revive in some shape the monastic system, and to introduce into our large parishes Brotherhoods of men bound by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Of course there is not the slightest objection already to two or three curates living together in a Clergy House provided by the incumbent, and, if they agree well, it is a comfortable arrangement, of which we have more than one example in our own Diocese. But the system proposed for adoption appears to be another thing altogether, and in my opinion is open to very grave objections. I object to introduce the system of vows over and above the vows of baptism. If the vow of *poverty* means that these new Anglican monks are to work for nothing, I doubt if there will be many of them! Where is this new supply of qualified young men to be found who will do Church work for nothing or next to nothing? If the vow of *chastity* means perpetual or even temporary celibacy, I doubt if Protestant Churchmen will care to see the new order among them. What the vow of *obedience* means, I do not at present understand. If the monks are to obey the clergyman of the parish, it is only what every licensed curate is bound to do now. If they are only to obey the bishop and to be

independent of the incumbent, there is risk of constant friction and collision, and a complete break up of the parochial system. Last, but not least, monasticism is a needless return to a machine which, however well meant at first, has been tried and found wanting, and was deliberately rejected by our Church at the Reformation.

There are other modern proposals of which I might speak, if time permitted, but I think it better to pass them by, and to conclude with a few remarks on two *black clouds* which threaten to obscure the whole horizon of the Church of England.

(1) One of those clouds is the continued want of unity, or rather the increase of the ‘unhappy divisions’ of Churchmen. I see them with sorrow, but not with surprise. So long as the *Ornaments Rubric* remains in its present disputed condition; so long as the Ecclesiastical Courts are disapproved and disobeyed, and those who disapprove them will not make any effort to obtain better tribunals; so long as imprisonment of clergymen for contumacy disgraces the law of England; so long as that huge anomaly, the episcopal veto, is allowed to continue—so long I have ceased to expect unity, order, or discipline within our pale. For anything I can see, we are likely to go from worse to worse, until we break up altogether. There are some handwritings on the wall which it needs no Daniel to interpret, and I heartily wish all loyal Churchmen would awake and look at them. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

I think it possible that some of you may not see clearly why I lay such stress on the four points I have just named, as primary causes of our ‘unhappy divisions.’ Let me try to explain my reasons.

(i) I believe the *Ornaments Rubric*, as it stands, is an enemy to peace, because you cannot get Churchmen to agree about its interpretation. One man says it means one thing, and another says it means another. It is an obscure and clumsy statement, which ought to be swept clean away, and replaced by an intelligible rule, stating plainly the maximum and minimum of Anglican ritual, granting a reasonable amount of liberty to every clergyman, but not allowing anyone to do just what he likes.

(ii) I believe that imprisonment of *clergymen for contumacy* is a disgrace to ecclesiastical law, and a penalty only worthy of the dark ages. However mistaken a clergyman may be, imprisonment makes him a martyr, and enlists public sympathy on his side. If the sentence of a competent Church Court in a question of doctrine or ritual is not obeyed, the only punishment should be suspension or deprivation.

(iii) I believe that the continuance of the *Episcopal veto* does great mischief. I agree with one third of the Royal Commissioners on Courts, that it ought to be given up. It is far too great a power to be placed in the hands of one fallible individual. It is a most invidious power, which no Bishop can

exercise without offending one party or another in his own diocese, and without risking flat contradiction to the decisions of his brother Bishops. Finally, it is diametrically opposed to one of the first principles of Magna Charta, which declares that the ruler shall 'never refuse justice.' Among the laity, I am convinced that the veto is a fertile source of grave dissatisfaction.

(iv) Last, but not least, I believe we shall never have peace until there is some *reform of our Ecclesiastical Courts*. At present a large body of clergymen, whether rightly or wrongly, regard them as incompetent, and pay no respect to their decisions. More than five years ago a Royal Commission reported that they were defective, and made suggestions for the creation of better tribunals. But from that time to this nothing whatever has been done. The old Courts have been discredited and damaged, and new ones have not been created; and the result is that for doctrinal and ritual disputes the Church has practically no law at all! This must be wrong. Why those who dislike the present Courts make no effort to obtain reform I do not pretend to explain. I only remark that if they are waiting in hope that they will some day get purely spiritual Courts in which the laity will have no seat or voice, I am certain they will be disappointed. The English Bishops are no more infallible judges than the Bishops of Rome. I am convinced that the House of Commons will never sanction such Courts until the Church is disestablished and disendowed. Even if Disestablishment were to come, I am convinced that the lay members of our Church would never allow the clergy *alone* to settle disputed questions of doctrine and ritual, any more than the laity in America, Australia, or Ireland. It is too late. The English laity will never submit to be priest-ridden again. They will insist that their voice shall be heard.

Of course, I am aware that all the four points I have mentioned are debatable and disputable, and admit of something being said on both sides. I do not for a moment suppose that you will all agree with me. I only want you to see that when I spoke of division and want of unity as a black cloud on our ecclesiastical horizon, I did not speak without cause.

Before passing away from this branch of my address, I think you may perhaps expect me to say something about two subjects which have greatly agitated the minds of Churchmen during the last year. Of course, I refer to the two ecclesiastical lawsuits commonly known as the St. Paul's Reredos case and the Lincoln Prosecution. But I must disappoint you. The two cases are still *sub judice* and undecided, and I think it is my plain duty to say nothing whatever about them.

(2) The other black cloud, or rather fog, which seems sweeping over our heavens, is the increasing laxity of opinion both about doctrine and practice among all professing Christians, which is a most painful sign of the times. As to *doctrinal* religion, multitudes all over England appear to see no difference between truth and error, and not to care what a minister holds or teaches

about the Inspiration of Scripture, or the Work of Christ, or the Atonement, or the Personality of the Holy Ghost, or the world to come, provided he is clever and earnest. Everybody is right, and nobody is wrong: everything is true, and nothing is false! A leading speaker at the recent Cardiff Congress spoke of the Thirty-nine Articles, and Pearson *On the Creed*, as ‘old-fashioned books, which he supposed it would raise a smile to mention as standards.’ And I cannot see from the report that any one objected to this statement. The popular sermon in this day is far too often a mere exhibition of intellectual fireworks, very pleasant to the many hearers who only like temporary excitement, and dislike any preaching which pricks their consciences and makes them uncomfortable, but utterly destitute of distinct doctrine; and powerless to move hearts or affect lives. In short, a ‘downgrade’ theology is spreading and is popular everywhere, and earnestness and cleverness are the idols of the day. As to *practical* religion, the Ten Commandments seem forgotten, except the sixth and the eighth. The shocking indifference constantly exhibited about fornication and adultery, and the total disregard of the Sabbath among myriads of all classes, both rich and poor, are melancholy evidences that I speak the truth. All this is very sad. There is a God in heaven who sees all that is going on, and takes account. There is a judgment day, and a world behind the grave. What will the end be?

Let me entreat my brethren in the ministry, both as their Bishop and an elder brother, to understand the times, and to be bold and faithful witnesses for God’s truth. Yes, witnesses! You cannot convert men, and give them eyes to see or hearts to feel. The Holy Ghost alone can do that. But you can be witnesses. Stand fast, both in public and in private, even if you stand alone. But you will not stand alone. I thank God there are hundreds of godly lay Churchmen who will stand by you to the last.

Stand fast in the old belief that the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation was given by inspiration of God, and that the historical facts recorded in the Old Testament are all credible and true. Do not be shaken by the vague assertions and big swelling words of those who sneer at everything supernatural, and talk about ‘the laws of nature, the discoveries of science, and the results of modern criticism.’

(i) As to the *facts mentioned in Genesis*, we may be content to stand by the side of Christ and the apostles. They repeatedly refer to them in the New Testament as real, genuine, authentic, true history. Were they likely to be deceived? Did not they know? The very supposition is blasphemy. I think we may rest satisfied with our old-fashioned views. We may safely continue to believe that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were real persons, and that the events mentioned in Genesis were not myths, or pleasing romances, but really took place.

(ii) As to the '*laws of nature*,' which modern philosophers tell us cannot be reconciled with the supernatural things mentioned in the Bible, we must remember that it is not at all certain that we know *all* the 'laws of nature,' and that higher and deeper laws may yet be discovered. At any rate they must own that some of the existing laws were not known until Newton's *Principia* brought them to light two centuries ago. But surely, if that is the case, we may fairly assume that many other laws may yet be found out, and that many problems which we cannot solve now will be solved hereafter. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* contains some striking remarks on this subject, which I recommend to the attention of all who have time to read.

(iii) Of the '*discoveries of science*' it may be truly said that 'we know in part.' About light and heat and force, about steam and gas and electricity, about chemistry and optics and mechanics, about medicine and anatomy and surgery, about geology and mineralogy and astronomy—about all these things, no doubt, we know much more than our grandfathers. But you may depend there is a great deal more to be learned. At present I cannot find that the discoveries of science really contradict the Scriptures. Even when they have appeared to do so, further discoveries have often solved the difficulty, and made all things plain. In the meantime it is wiser to remember the great Faraday principle, and to cultivate a 'judicious suspense,' when we find knots we cannot untie. When men like Sir George Gabriel Stokes, President of the Royal Society, are found advocating the divine authority of the Bible on public platforms, the friends of the grand old book need not be afraid of science. In saying what I have just said, I should not like to be misunderstood. Remember that I have not the slightest sympathy with those weak-kneed Christians who seem to think that science and religion can never harmonize, and that they must always scowl and look askance at one another, like two quarrelsome dogs. On the contrary, I shall always hail the annual discoveries of physical science with a hearty welcome. For the continual progress of its students by experiment and observation, and for their annual accumulation of facts, I am deeply thankful. I only fear that, in their zeal, they are sometimes apt to forget that it is most illogical to draw a general conclusion from a particular premise, to build houses of theories without foundations. I am firmly convinced that the words of God's mouth, and the works of God's hands, will never be found really to contradict one another. When they *appear* to do so, I am content to *wait*. Time will untie the knot.

(iv) As to the *results of modern criticism*, whether German or British, it will be time enough to consider them when the critics are all of one mind. At present they are hopelessly disagreed, and we may safely wait. We need not be frightened when some men coolly tell us that Moses and David and Solomon never wrote anything at all, or prune away book after book out of the Bible, as if they would improve and reduce the dear old book into a skeleton.

We can afford to wait. Well and wisely says Bishop Ellicott, himself no mean critic, 'There are no "well-established results of biblical criticism," save those old and fundamental truths which modern thought is trying to explain away and to modify. There has been indeed no lack of unverified assertions that from time to time have claimed to be established results; but true biblical criticism knows them not. Nay, they are already becoming antiquated by the very science on which they have been supposed securely to rest' (Gloucester Diocese Conference, 1888).

Stand fast in the maintenance of the grand old dogmatic truths which have been the glory of the Church of England for the last three centuries, the truths which were first drawn from the Scriptures and then embalmed in her Creeds, Articles, and Prayer-book. Beware of watering them down in order to suit the taste of modern times. Worldly men may say that they are effete, worn out, and not fitted to the nineteenth century. Ask them in reply to show you any other religion which is doing real good to mankind. Semi-sceptics and half-and-half Christians may say that they cannot get over the many difficulties of revealed religion. Tell them in reply that the difficulties of unbelief are far greater than the difficulties of faith. Challenge them boldly to show anything which supports souls in the day of bereavement on the bed of sickness, or in the hour of death, except old-fashioned dogmatic Christianity.

Stand fast in the maintenance of a high standard of practical religion, and never be ashamed of regarding the Ten Commandments as the Christian's best rule of life and test of true faith. Resist every attempt to change our old English Sunday into a Continental one, and to injure the working classes by throwing open picture galleries and museums on Sunday. So long as the fourth Commandment is part of the Decalogue, and is read every week in our most solemn ante-Communion Office by the clergy, and so long as the people are desired to pray that God would 'incline their hearts to keep this law,' as well as the sixth and eighth—so long the feet of defenders of the old English Sunday stand on very firm ground.

I will detain you no longer. I have already trespassed too long on your attention. But the evening of my life draws near, and I am not likely to have many more opportunities of addressing the Diocese collectively. 'The time will come,' said St. Paul, 'when men will not endure sound doctrine' (2 Tim. iv. 3). I fear that time draws very near. But I trust there never will be a day when the Churchmen of Lancashire will loose their hold on the truths of the Gospel, and cease to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3). If it were my last word, I would say, as dying Sir Henry Lawrence said in the cantonments of Lucknow: 'Never, never, never surrender!'