

PRINCIPLES FOR  
CHURCHMEN

A MANUAL OF POSITIVE STATEMENTS  
ON SOME SUBJECTS OF CONTROVERSY

WITH AN

*EXPLANATORY INTRODUCTION ON THE PRESSING DANGERS  
WHICH BESET THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

BY THE RIGHT REV.

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"LIGHT FROM OLD TIMES" ETC.

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CONTAINING THE BISHOP'S FAREWELL LETTER  
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## VII

### THOUGHTS ON THE MINISTRY.

THERE are few subjects on which error has been so frequent in the Churches of Christ as the subject of the Christian ministry. There are few errors which have done so much harm to the cause of pure religion. I propose in this paper to offer a few brief thoughts on the whole subject, which may help to clear the minds of some of my readers, and dispel the fog by which it is too often surrounded. He that really knows what he believes in these days about the Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, and can give Scriptural reasons for his belief, is an uncommon man.

I. First and foremost, let me show my readers *what warrant and authority we have for the minister's office.*

I meet that inquiry without hesitation. The office of a minister is a Scriptural institution, ordained, appointed, taught, and commanded, both directly and indirectly, in the New Testament. From the very first an order of men was set apart for the service of religion, for the conduct of public worship, for keeping up prayer and praise, for administering the sacraments, for teaching the ignorant, for building up the saints, and for ordaining others to carry on God's work in the world. In short, wherever the Apostles founded Churches, they appointed pastors to feed the flocks they had gathered together.

The proof of this assertion stands out so plainly before my eyes in the Acts and Epistles, that I am unable to understand how anyone who takes the Bible for his rule of faith can get over it. The two Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy, and the one to Titus, appear to me to settle the question. If these three inspired letters do not sanction the Christian ministry, there appears to my mind no meaning in words. Beside them stand the broad facts, that St. Paul "ordained elders in every Church" (Acts xiv. 23),—that "elders" of the Church are mentioned six times in the Acts and in the Epistles of James and Peter,—that the Epistle to the Ephesians gives a list of officers set in the Church by God, and the Epistle to the Philippians begins by naming with the saints at Philippi "the bishops and deacons." All these facts, I say, make a mass of evidence which I cannot get over. I do not maintain that they prove the divine right of Episcopacy as the only Scriptural form of Church government, a theory which, with Bishop Lightfoot, I entirely repudiate. But I do maintain that in face of these facts I am justified in asserting with confidence that the ministerial office is a Scriptural institution. Its warrant, in short, is the written Word of God.

Take a jury of the first twelve intelligent, honest, disinterested, unprejudiced men you can find, and set them down with a New Testament to examine this question by themselves: "Is the ministry a Scriptural thing or not?" I have no doubt what their verdict would be.

I ask my readers to remember this point, and to let it sink down into their minds. Let us beware in these days that we do not rush into the extreme of undervaluing the office which the minister of Christ holds. There is some danger in this direction. Let us grasp firmly certain fixed principles about the Christian ministry, and, however strong our dislike of priestcraft and aversion to Romanism, let nothing tempt us to let these principles slip out of our hands. Surely there is solid middle ground between a grovelling idolatry of sacerdotalism on one hand, and a disorderly anarchy on the other. Surely it does not follow, because we will not be Papists in this matter of the ministry, that we must needs be Quakers or Plymouth Brethren. This, at any rate, does not seem to have been the mind of St. Paul.

As for myself, so far from undervaluing the office of the ministry, I am disposed to magnify its importance. It would be easy to multiply reasons for saying this. But two shall suffice.

(a) For one thing, the ministerial office is *a most wise and useful provision of God*. It secures the regular maintenance of all Christ's ordinances and means of grace. It provides an undying machinery for promoting the awakening of sinners and the edification of saints. All experience proves that everybody's business soon becomes nobody's business; and if this is true in other matters, it is no less true in the matter of religion. Our God is a God of order, and a God who works by means, and we have no right to expect His cause to be kept up by constant miraculous interpositions, while His servants stand idle. For the uninterrupted preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments, no better plan can be devised than the appointment of a regular order of men who shall give themselves wholly to Christ's business.

(b) For another thing, let us settle it firmly in our minds that the ministerial office is an *honourable privilege*. It is an honour to be the Ambassador of a King: the very PERSON of such an officer of State is respected, and called legally sacred. It is an honour to bear the tidings of a victory such as Trafalgar and Waterloo: before the invention of telegraphs it was a highly coveted distinction. But how much greater honour is it to be the ambassador of the King of kings, and to proclaim the good news of the conquest achieved on Calvary! To serve directly such a Master, to carry such a message, to know that the results of our work, if God shall bless it, are eternal, this is indeed a privilege. Other labourers may

work for a corruptible crown, but the minister of Christ for an incorruptible. Never is a land in worse condition than when the ministers of religion have caused their office to be ridiculed and despised. It is a tremendous word in Malachi: “I have made you contemptible and base before all the people according as ye have not kept my ways “(Malachi ii. 9). But, whether men will hear or forbear, the office of a faithful ambassador is honourable. It was a fine saying of an old missionary on his death-bed, who died at the age of ninety-six: “The very best thing that a man can do is to preach the Gospel.”

Let me leave this branch of my subject with an earnest request that all who pray will never forget to make supplications and prayers and intercession for the ministers of Christ, that there never may be wanting a due supply of them at home and in the mission field, that they may be kept sound in the faith and holy in their lives, and that they may take heed to *themselves* as well as to the *doctrine* (1 Tim. iv. 16).

Let it be remembered that while our office is honourable, useful, and Scriptural, it is also one of deep and painful responsibility! We watch for souls “as those who must give account” at the judgment day (Heb. xiii. 17). If souls are lost through our unfaithfulness, their blood will be required at our hands. If we had only to read services and administer sacraments, to wear a peculiar dress and go through a round of ceremonies, bodily exercise, gestures, and postures, our position would be comparatively light. But this is not all. We have got to deliver our Master’s message,—to keep back nothing that is profitable,—to declare all the counsel of God. If we tell our congregations *less* than the truth or *more* than the truth, we may ruin for ever immortal souls. Life and death are in the power of the preacher’s tongue. “Woe is unto us if we preach not the Gospel!” (1 Cor. ix. 16).

Once more I say to all readers of this paper, Pray for ministers. No wonder St. Paul asks, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor. ii. 16). Remember the old saying of the Fathers: “None are in more spiritual danger than ministers.” It is easy to criticise and find fault with us. We have a treasure in earthen vessels. We are men of like passions with others, and not infallible. Pray for us in these trying, tempting, controversial days, that our Church may never lack bishops, priests, and deacons who are sound in the faith, bold as lions, wise as serpents, and yet harmless as doves. The very man who said, “Grace is given me to preach,” is the same man who said, in another place, “Pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” (2 Thess. iii. 1, 2).

II. In the second place, I think it necessary to *fence the ministerial office with cautions*.

I can find no words to express my strong feeling about the importance of holding right views of the ministerial office. Error on this point has been the plague of the Church of Christ for at least sixteen centuries, and the fruitful source of innumerable evils. I wish, therefore, to place my readers on their guard, and to point out what the minister of the New Testament is not, and was never meant to be.

(a) First and foremost, the Christian minister is *not a mediator* between God and men. This is an office which belongs to Christ alone, and He has never deputed it to anyone. Christianity is not a vicarious religion. I mean by this that a man cannot put his soul in his minister's hands as he puts his money in the hands of a banker, or his legal affairs in the hands of a lawyer, and then assume that of course he will go to heaven. This is a complete delusion. Every one of us must have personal dealings for himself with Christ, by his own faith, his own prayer, and his own actions, and no one else can act for him. We must seek for ourselves if we want to find and know for ourselves, if we want the door of mercy to be opened. A true minister will show the Mediator; but he cannot be the mediator himself

(b) In the next place, the Christian minister *cannot give grace*. He cannot give it at the font, when he reads the baptismal service and receives an infant into the Church. He cannot give it at the communion table, when he consecrates the bread and wine, and gives them to the communicants. He cannot give it in the pulpit, however faithfully he preaches the gospel. He cannot give it at the bedside of the dying man, however faithfully and lovingly he pleads with him. Oh no! To give life is the peculiar prerogative of God. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John vi. 63). The cleverest philosophers cannot create natural life, and the greatest ministers cannot give spiritual life. We may teach the value and need of grace, but we cannot give it. We may say, "Repent, be converted, behold the Lamb." But we can go no further. What we say, the Holy Ghost must apply to the soul.

(c) In the next place, the Christian minister was not meant to be a *confessor*. It is supposed by some Christians that one chief duty of a minister of religion is to hear private confessions of sin from the people committed to his charge, and after hearing to grant absolution. The idea is utterly without warrant of Scripture. There is neither precept nor example to justify it. The practice is dishonouring to the priestly office of Christ, and has been proved by experience to do far more harm than good. It puts two sinners in a thoroughly wrong position. It exalts the confessor far too high. It places those who confess far too low. It gives the confessor a

place which it is not safe for any child of Adam to occupy. It imposes on those who confess a bondage to which it is not safe for any child of Adam to submit. It sinks one poor sinner into the degrading attitude of a serf. It raises another poor sinner into a dangerous mastery over his brother's soul. It makes the confessor little less than a God. It makes those who confess little better than slaves. If my readers love the Church of England, and wish the ministerial office to be held in honour, I charge them never to countenance the idea that clergymen ought to be confessors, or to tolerate any attempt to reintroduce auricular confession.

(d) In the next place, the Christian minister is *not infallible*. The vulgar notion that a clergyman is not likely to hold or teach erroneous doctrines, and that we seldom need to doubt the truth of anything he tells us in the pulpit, is one of the most mischievous errors which has been bequeathed to England by the Church of Rome. It is a complete delusion. Ordination confers no immunity from error. Clergymen, like Churches, may err both in living and matters of faith. The Apostle Peter erred greatly at Antioch, where Paul withstood him to the face. Many of the Fathers and Reformers and Puritans made great mistakes. The teaching of all ministers ought to be constantly compared with the Scriptures, and when it contradicts the Scriptures it ought not to be believed. However high a clergyman's office may be, and however learned and devout he may appear, he is still only an uninspired man, and can make mistakes. His opinion must never be set above the Word.

(e) Last, but not least, the Christian minister is *not a sacrificing priest*, and does not offer any sacrifice in the Lord's Supper. This is a point which it is of the utmost importance to understand. A flood of erroneous teaching is coming over the Church of England on the subject, and it becomes every loyal Churchman to be on his guard. That a clergyman is repeatedly called a "priest" in the rubrics of the Prayer-book no one thinks of denying. But that the word "priest" in these rubrics means anything more than "presbyter" or "elder" can never be proved. It certainly does not mean a person who offers up a sacrifice. The plain truth is, that *there can be no priest without a sacrifice*; and for any sacrifice in the Lord's Supper, except that of praise and thanksgiving, which all Christians can offer up, there is no place under the Gospel, or in the standards of the Church of England. To use the words of the Thirty-first Article, "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone." It cannot be added to or repeated in the Lord's Supper. There is not a tittle of proof that this blessed Sacrament was regarded as a *sacrifice* by our Lord or His Apostles. Not once is it called a sacrifice in the Acts or Epistles of God's Word written, not once in the Articles of our

Church, not once in the Communion Service of the Prayer-book, not once in the Church Catechism! In the face of such crushing facts as these, they are not to be heard who say that clergymen are *sacrificing priests*. A man cannot be literally a priest when he has no sacrifice to offer. Let us take our stand firmly on this principle, the principle alike of the Bible, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Book of Common Prayer.

I leave the negative side of my subject here. In what I have said by way of caution, to show what the Christian minister is not, I trust my readers will not misunderstand my meaning. If anyone supposes that I think lightly of the office of a Christian minister, he is totally mistaken. I regard it as an honourable office, instituted by Christ Himself, and of general necessity for carrying on the work of Christ's Gospel. I look on ministers as preachers and teachers of God's Word, God's ambassadors, God's messengers, God's servants, God's shepherds, God's stewards, God's overseers, God's witnesses, as labourers in God's vineyard and trumpeters in God's army,—offices of great labour, great dignity, and great responsibility. But I cannot give them names and official titles for which I find no authority in Scripture, or in the formularies of my own Church.

III. The third thing which I propose to do in this paper is to show my readers what is *the chief work for which the ministers of Christ's Church are ordained*. That work, I say without hesitation, is to preach God's Word.

That the Christian minister is intended to lead the worship of God in the congregation, to read the Scriptures to the people, to administer the Sacrament, to visit the sick and dying, to carry the gospel from house to house, to look carefully after the young, to maintain godly discipline, to instruct the ignorant, to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, to sympathise, as occasion requires,—all this is undoubtedly true. The clergyman who neglects such work is not doing his duty. But after all, the main, principal, and foremost business of a minister in the Church of England is to be a preacher of the Word.

The plain truth is that, in the great battle which Christ's Church has to fight, the minister is to be the trumpeter. This, we read in the prophet Ezekiel, was peculiarly the office which God commanded the Old Testament prophets to discharge. And the New Testament is not contrary to the Old. A little reflection and examination will soon show us that a better illustration of the position and duty of the Christian minister than that of a trumpeter, could hardly be found (Ezek. xxxiii. 1-7).

Does the trumpet sound the alarm and awaken the soldier to meet danger? In time of war, "Saul blew the trumpet, saying, Let the Hebrews hear"

(1 Sam. xiii. 3). So must the minister endeavour continually to arouse, to awaken, and to stir careless souls.

Does the trumpeter sound a peculiar note to show the soldier the duty required? It was in this way that the tribes in the wilderness were directed (Num. x. 1-6). So must the minister try to guide souls, and show them the way they must go.

Does the trumpeter sound the recall when the troops are going in a wrong direction, and need to be halted? (2 Sam. ii. 28). So must the minister try to stop souls when they are going astray.

Does the trumpeter sound a rousing blast when the soldier is ordered to charge? It was thus that Gideon stirred his little band against the Midianites, when he told them to blow their trumpets and cry, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon" (Judges vii. 20). So must the minister try to cheer and encourage souls, and say, "Fear not: quit you like men, be strong."

Does the trumpeter sound a gathering note, to call the soldiers together and unite them in one band? It was thus that Nehemiah acted when the feeble Jews were building the wall of Jerusalem: "In what place ye hear the sound of the trumpet, there resort ye to us" (Neh. iv. 20). So must the minister try to unite Christians, and make them one body, and helpful to one another.

Last, but not least, does the trumpeter stand by the commanding officer, and take his orders from him? So it was with Nehemiah: "He that sounded the trumpet was by me" (Neh. iv. 18). So it should be with the minister. He must always keep close to the Captain, Jesus Christ, and act and teach entirely at His command.

In short, the office of the trumpeter is an important and honourable one, and the figure is one of which the Christian minister has no cause to be ashamed. To preach the Word of God, to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, to teach continually in the pulpit, and from house to house, the noble lesson which Christ has given us,—all this may seem contemptible to some. The men of Jericho, no doubt, despised the blowing of trumpets around their city. But when the seventh day arrived and their walls fell down flat, they found, to their cost, that the things which they had despised were "mighty to pull down strongholds."

Let me take occasion to urge on all who read this paper, the immense importance of maintaining right and sound views of the subject of *preaching*. Let us distinctly understand, firmly hold, and constantly tell others that the first, foremost, and principal work of the minister is to be a preacher of God's Word, and let us beware of the growing disposition to depreciate sermons, and to exaggerate the Lord's Supper and the reading of liturgical services. The communion table and the reading desk are



being exalted to such a position that they are comparatively overshadowing the pulpit. Hundreds of sincere, devoted, earnest, hard-working clergymen give such an extravagant amount of time to the public reading of prayers, and the administration of the Lord's Supper, that they leave themselves no leisure for pulpit preparation, and are obliged to content their congregations with short, shallow, hastily-composed sermons, devoid alike of matter, power, fire, or effectiveness. In saying this, I know that I tread on delicate ground. But I must speak what I think. In right and due reverence for the Lord's Supper, I trust I yield to none. But I plead for Scriptural proportion in our estimate of means of grace; and when sacraments and liturgical prayers are made everything in public worship, and preaching the Word is made little of, or thrust into a corner, I assert that Scriptural proportion is disregarded.

What warrant have we in the Bible for making the Lord's Supper the first, foremost, principal, and most important thing in public worship, and making comparatively little of preaching? There are at most but five books in the whole canon of the New Testament in which the Lord's Supper is even mentioned. About grace, faith, and redemption,—about the work of Christ, the work of the Spirit, and the love of the Father,—about man's ruin, weakness, and spiritual poverty,—about justification, sanctification, and holy living,—about all these mighty subjects we find the inspired writers giving us line upon line, and precept upon precept. About the Lord's Supper, on the contrary, we may observe in the great bulk of the New Testament a speaking silence. Even the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, containing much instruction about a minister's duties, do not contain a word about it. This fact alone surely speaks volumes! To thrust the Lord's Supper forward, till it towers over and overrides everything else in religion, is giving it a position for which there is no authority in God's Word.

What, on the other hand, is the witness of the New Testament about the value of preaching? I find that our Lord Jesus during the whole period of His earthly ministry was continually and everywhere a preacher. I find that His last command to the Apostles was to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark xvi. 15). I find that the whole company of His Apostles and Disciples were continually teaching and preaching the Word. I can find no record of Church assemblies in the New Testament in which preaching, or teaching orally, does not occupy a most prominent position. It appears to me to be the chief instrument by which the Holy Ghost not only awakens sinners, but also leads on and establishes saints. I observe that in the very last words that St. Paul wrote to Timothy, as a young minister, he especially enjoins on him to “preach the Word” (2 Tim. iv. 2). I cannot therefore believe that any system of worship in which

the sermon is made little of, or thrust into a corner, can be a Scriptural system, or one likely to have the blessing of God. I hold firmly with Bishop Latimer that it is one of Satan's great aims to exalt ceremonies and put down preaching. The first thing which the Church of England commissions her ministers to do is to preach. In the Ordination service, the bishop says to every priest, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God." "Ye shall call on this child to hear sermons," is the first charge which our baptismal service gives to god-fathers and god-mothers. There is a deep meaning in the words, "Despise not prophesyings" (1 Thess. v. 20). A contempt for sermons is a sure mark of a decline in spiritual religion.

What may we learn from Church history in every age about the importance of preaching? It is certain that the brightest days of the Primitive Church were the days when men like Chrysostom and Augustine were constantly expounding God's Word, and swaying multitudes by their sermons. It is equally certain that the darkest era in the annals of Christendom was the time before the Reformation, when the pulpit was silent, and Christianity seemed nothing more than a huge mass of forms and ceremonies. It was the preaching of men like Luther and Zwingle on the Continent, and Latimer and Hooper in our own land, which opened the eyes of the laity and broke the chains of Rome. It was the preaching of Whitfield, and the Wesleys, and Grimshaw, and Berridge, and Romaine, and Venn in the last century, which awoke our sleeping forefathers, saved the Church of England from ruin, and delivered this kingdom from a worse than French revolution.

I charge my readers to remember these facts and consider them well. Stand fast on old principles. Do not forsake the old paths. Let nothing tempt you to believe that multiplication of forms and ceremonies, constant reading of liturgical services, or frequent communions, will ever do so much good to souls as the powerful, fiery, fervent preaching of God's Word. Daily services without sermons may gratify and edify a few handfuls of believers, but they will never reach, draw, attract, or arrest the great mass of mankind. If men want to do good to the multitude, if they want to reach their hearts and consciences, they must walk in the steps of Whitfield, Latimer, Luther, Chrysostom, and St. Paul; they must attack them through their ears. They must blow the trumpet of the everlasting gospel loud and long. They must "preach the Word."

IV. The last thing which I propose to do in this paper, is to show my readers *how the chief work of a minister is to be done*. I say, then, without hesitation, that a preacher will do no good if he does not "declare all the

counsel of God.” In his sermons he must “keep back nothing that is profitable.” He must boldly, confidently, and fully proclaim God’s message, as if he thoroughly believed it. He must never forget that he is a trumpeter in the army of Christ, and take heed that his trumpet “gives no uncertain sound.”

In military matters, common sense points out that the trumpeter of a regiment is perfectly useless if he does not know how to use the instrument which is placed in his hands. He may be duly entered on the muster roll, and occupy a conspicuous position, and wear a splendid uniform; but if he does not know how to carry out the orders of his commanding officer, if he can neither give the sound to advance or retreat, to charge, to halt, or to retire, he is more likely to do harm than good. In fact, he is likely, in the day of battle, to throw the whole force into confusion.

Now, in the great campaign of the Church of Christ, it is just the same with the ministers of the everlasting gospel. A man may be duly ordained and commissioned by those who have authority, and placed in charge of a congregation; but if he does not know what to preach, so as to do good to souls, if his message is so uncertain, confused, and indistinct, that his hearers cannot understand what he wishes them to believe, to be, or to do, it is absurd to suppose that he will help anyone to heaven. In spite of orders, licence, and commission, such a minister is as useless as the ignorant regimental trumpeter. The blessing of the Holy Ghost is not promised to any and every kind of sermon, but to sermons which contain distinct Scriptural truth.

I say with sorrow, but I feel obliged to say it, that the absence of “a certain sound,” the want of sharply-cut, well-defined doctrine in sermons is one of the worst and most dangerous symptoms of the present day. It is a growing evil, I am afraid, and one that requires looking in the face. I hear on all sides that old and experienced Christians complain that a vast quantity of modern preaching is so foggy, and hazy, and dim, and indistinct, and hesitating, and timid, and cautious, and fenced with doubts, that the preacher does not seem to know what he believes himself. Of course, his hearers cannot be expected to believe anything at all! I do not hear so often that men preach honest, outspoken Romanism or Scepticism, as that they ingeniously fill up their pulpit half-hour with colourless, pointless homilies, containing *nothing at all*. And I do hear it constantly said, that throughout the land there is a deplorable scarcity of a “certain sound” from the lips of Christian ministers.

What excuse any English clergyman can allege for undecided and indistinct teaching, and an “uncertain sound” in his pulpit, I am utterly at a loss to discover. He is a minister of a Church which has declared her mind about doctrine most distinctly in that noble confession of faith, the Thirty-

nine Articles. I ask any impartial man to read those Articles, and to mark the strong and decided language which they use in speaking of *things which are essential to salvation*. I say, without hesitation, that, concerning the nature of God and the Holy Trinity,—concerning the sufficiency and authority of Scripture,—concerning the sinfulness and helplessness of natural man,—concerning justification by faith alone,—concerning the place and value of good works,—concerning salvation only by the name of Christ,—concerning all these grand foundations of the Christian religion, and about the errors of the Church of Rome, it is hard to conceive language more decided, clear, distinct, ringing, and trumpet-toned than that of the Thirty-nine Articles.

But this is not all. The Church of England requires every person who is ordained to declare his assent to the Thirty-nine Articles at the very beginning of his ministry. And, as if to make assurance doubly sure, the Church requires every clergyman, instituted to any living, at this very day, when he begins to officiate in his Church, “publicly and openly, in the presence of his congregation, to read the whole Thirty-nine Articles, and immediately after reading to make the declaration of assent to them,” saying, “*I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God.*” These are indisputable facts, which cannot be explained away. In the face of these facts, I cannot understand how any clergyman can be content to preach such indistinct and uncertain sermons that no man can possibly learn from them what he must do to be saved.

I speak strongly because I feel deeply. The condition of the Church of England demands “great plainness of speech.” When the ship is among breakers, the officer of the watch cannot afford to polish his language and use circumlocution. The ship of the Church of England is in danger, and all her sons must do their duty. Let me therefore mention a few leading points about which a distinct, certain sound is much wanted just now in all our pulpits.

(a) We want a more certain sound about the *inspiration, sufficiency, and supremacy of Holy Scripture*. There is a growing inclination to depreciate the blessed volume, as a respectable old book and nothing more, containing a great deal of truth, but truth mixed up with error and fables. There is a hasty readiness to assume that whenever the conclusions of so-called science conflict with the Bible, the Bible must be wrong and science right, it being coolly forgotten that perhaps we do not rightly interpret the Book. Away with all this! Let us boldly place the Bible on the pedestal where our forefathers placed it, and maintain, like them, that, however imperfectly we may understand it, the old Book is perfect, and is an infallible rule of faith and practice.

(b) We want a more certain sound about *the sinfulness, guilt, and corruption of human nature*. There is a widespread disposition to speak of man as a pitiable creature, but not as deserving of God's wrath and condemnation,—as one who is weak and unstable, but not as one who has no power to turn himself, do good, and continue right before God. Let us return to the old paths, and unhesitatingly declare man's utter vileness and danger, and his pressing need of a new birth, and an entire change of heart. Whether men know it or not, I believe there is a vast amount of Pelagianism around us.

(c) We want a more certain sound about the work and offices of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. Men nowadays will dwell exclusively on His prophetic office, the beauty of His personal character, the splendid example of His kindness, patience, condescension, purity, and self-denial. All this, however true, is only half the truth, and by far the least important half too. The main thing about Christ, of which this age never hears enough, is the atonement He made by His death, His vicarious sacrifice on the Cross, the redemption He obtained for man by His blood, His victory over the grave by His resurrection, His active life of intercession at God's right hand, the absolute necessity of simple faith in Him. These blessed truths are seldom made enough of in this day. They are either judiciously dropped as offensive, or coolly left in the background, as old fossils unsuited to the nineteenth century. If there is not a vast amount of veiled Socinianism around us, I am greatly mistaken.

(d) We want a more certain sound about *the work of the Holy Ghost*. There is a great quantity of teaching, I am afraid, in which there is no place left for the Third Person of the Trinity. His presence in the hearts of professing Christians is taken for granted. They have Him as a matter of course, because they are baptized, or because they belong to the Church, or because they are communicants! In short, many congregations might say, like one of old, "We have not so much as heard whether there is any Holy Ghost." But surely this is not Apostolic teaching. People need to be told now as much as they were told eighteen centuries ago, that the fruits of the Spirit are the only evidence of having the Spirit, and that those fruits must be seen,—that we must be born of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, sanctified by the Spirit, and feel the operations of the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). There is far more of the Macedonian heresy existing in the nineteenth century than most people suppose.

(e) We want a more certain sound about *personal holiness*. I fear the standard of daily life is lower just now than it has been for many years. People seem unable to realize that there is anything inconsistent with bap-

tismal vows, in ball-going, theatre-going, gambling, card-playing, excessive dressing, novel-reading, Sabbath-breaking, and an incessant round of gaiety and amusements. The border-line between the Church and the world seems completely effaced and forgotten. A crucified life of self-denial and close walk with God, a life of real devotedness and zeal to do good, is hardly ever to be seen! Yet surely our Lord meant something when He spoke of “taking up the cross,” and St. Paul meant something when he said, “Come out and be separate.”—“Be not conformed to this world.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (2 Cor. vi. 17; Rom. xii. 2; Heb. xii. 14). If Christ returns the second time in this generation, we shall find His words about the days of Noah and Lot fully verified. Those days are upon us.

(f) We want a more certain sound about *the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper*. Thousands of people seem to live and die in the secret belief that they were “born again,” and received the grace of the Spirit, in baptism, though from their infancy they have known nothing of what the Church Catechism calls “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.” They are not “dead to sin,” but actually live in it; and yet, forsooth, they think they are born again!—Multitudes more are continually receiving the Lord’s Supper under the belief that somehow or other it *must do them good*, though they are utterly destitute of the Catechism standard, and neither “repent of sin, nor purpose to lead a new life, nor have a lively faith in God’s mercy in Christ, nor a thankful remembrance of His death, nor live in charity with all men.” They seem, in short, to have imbibed the idea that the Lord’s Supper can give grace to the graceless, and is a means of conversion and justification! And all this time the Scripture says expressly, “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. ii. 29). And again: “Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)” (1 Pet. iii. 21). And again: “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor. xi. 29).

Now to these extravagant views of the effect of the sacraments I unhesitatingly assert that the Church of England gives no countenance at all, and her clergy ought to give a “certain sound” about them. The Twenty-fifth Article declares plainly about both sacraments, that “in such *only* as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation.” The Twenty-eighth Article says: “To such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body

of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." The Twenty-ninth Article says: "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ; but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing."

(g) Last, but not least, we want everywhere a more certain sound about the *state after death*. There is a growing disposition in this day to give up the old doctrine of the judgment of the wicked, and the eternal misery of all who die impenitent and unbelieving. Men are gradually being indoctrinated with the notion that there is *hope for all* beyond the grave, and that at any rate there is nothing to fear, and no punishment after death, no matter how we live or die. I regard such teaching as most mischievous and likely to promote carelessness and immorality. Yet in hundreds of pulpits I suspect the subject is either carefully avoided, or else handled in a most unsatisfactory manner. Let us beware of being wise above that which is written, and of ignoring, shirking, or strangling plain texts of Scripture. I cannot feel surprised when I am told that abandoned women in the streets of London have been heard to say, "Come along: who's afraid? Some of the parsons say there is no hell."

Such are the seven points about which I declare my belief that a "certain sound" is greatly wanted among Christian ministers in this day. I commend them to the thought, and reflection, and prayers of all who read this paper. I lay no claim to infallibility. I may be greatly mistaken. But it is my deliberate conviction that the parishes in which these seven points are most distinctly preached in the pulpit, and afterwards boldly and lovingly taught from house to house, are precisely those parishes in which the congregations are largest, the communicants most numerous, and the power of godliness in daily life most conspicuous among the worshippers. I assert boldly, that if there was more "certain sound" in the pulpit on those seven points, there would soon be far more vital religion in the land, and a very different census of religious worship. Oh that we could pray more constantly, "Lord, send forth more labourers into Thy harvest! Raise up many more faithful ministers in Thy Church! Revive Thy work in England! Give us more trumpeters of the Gospel!"