

lism, in fine, has her Dorcas^s and her Phœbes still, as in the days of old,—more, we rejoice to think, every day; yet who can doubt of the immense materials of like precious quality that lie over the surface of the Christian community all unused, while sisters of charity and mercy in thousands and tens of thousands occupy the ground? These questions are surely worthy of serious consideration. Some of them, indeed, may admit of satisfactory solution, and some of them possibly of none; but they at least deserve the serious pondering of our deepest and wisest minds. Certainly whenever a real principle lies at the bottom of any part of our great adversary's system—any genuine human want to be met, or aspiration to be satisfied—we shall weaken, not strengthen, our position, by the practical ignoring of it. *The pernicious abuse is to be counteracted and exorcised not by the disuse but the use of the thing abused.* Thus, to take the two most obvious and presently practical instances, it is not by the scandalous neglect of the pure and solemn music of the sanctuary, that we shall counteract the fascination of a gorgeous ritual worship; nor shall we by mere denunciations of sisterhoods and nuns dispel the charm which meek self-denial and unwearied works of mercy ever wield. Our real strength lies at once in contending against that which is evil in our adversaries, and outdoing them by the better use of that which is true and good.

The line of remark into which we have been led is not the less instructive and healthful that it has led us to throw stress rather on our own weaknesses and shortcomings, than on the glaring corruptions and absurdities of our great adversary. It is in the remedying of these evils in ourselves that our great strength must lie. We shall conquer in the day of battle, not so much by the controversial confutation of error, as by the practical carrying out and living embodiment of the truth. We need not alone to strengthen our assault, but to repair and fortify our defences. How this is, with God's blessing, to be done, is sufficiently manifest. The correct diagnosis of the disease points at once to the needed remedy. If the main weakness of Protestantism lies in the broken and divided state of its forces, in the anomalies and abuses which disfigure some of its fairest portions, in the unsettled and uneasy state of religious belief within its bosom, in the narrow and imperfect development of its church life,—then the appropriate correctives lie immediately before us. They may be summed up in four words,—unity, purity, rational faith, and a complete and living congregational life. Let us draw faster the cords of Christian brotherhood, and thus close in our line of defence against our common enemy; let us each in our several spheres strive for the removal of every remediable abuse and stumbling-block; let us hold the living Word in a firmer grasp, at once of an intelligent and an assured faith; let us increase our instrumentalities and mature our methods of spiritual discipline, both for the guiding of weak souls and drawing forth the virtues and holy energies of all; let the Church, in short, be united, and pure, and believing; and wisely fervent and diligent at once in her pastoral and missionary work, and she will be again, as in the days of her first baptism and early prime, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

Those trees flourish most, and bear sweetest fruit, which stand most in the sun. The praying Christian stands nigh to God, and hath God nigh to him in all that he calls upon him for: and therefore you may expect his fruit to be sweet and ripe; when another that stands as it were in the shade, and at a distance from God (through neglect of, or infrequency in this duty) will have little fruit found on his branches, and that but green and sour.

GURNALL.