

ought I know, the world may be full of pure mathematicians who are absolutely useless to it; but it does not follow that the practical worker in applied mathematics can get on just as well without any mathematics at all. In like manner, tho there may be such a thing as a barren knowledge of even such vital truth as the Christian verities, there is not and can not be such a thing as a fruitful Christian ministry without a sound and living knowledge of these verities. And it is very much to be deprecated that men should sometimes permit themselves to be driven, through their keen sense of the valuelessness of an inoperative knowledge, to speak as if no importance attached to that vitalizing knowledge of divine truth without which any true ministry is impossible. The warning given us by the lamented Aubrey Moore is sorely needed in our times. He says:

"There are many earnest-minded Christians who are so morbidly afraid of a barren belief that they sometimes allow themselves to talk as if to hold fast to any form of sound words must be formalism; as if, in fact, the belief in a creed were rather dangerous than helpful. It is true, of course, as we all know well, that a right creed can not save a man, and that when the bridegroom comes many may be found with lamps that have no oil; but surely if we discard our lamps, much of the precious oil we have may be lost."*

The fundamental principle on which the indispensableness to the preacher of a sound knowledge of Christian truth rests is not more surely rooted in a true psychology than it is illustrated by universal experience. That "conduct in the long run corresponds with belief," as Bishop Westcott puts it, "all experience goes to show." And certainly he is entitled to add that "this unquestionable principle carries with it momentous consequences." "Patient investigation," he continues, "will show that no doctrine can be without a bearing on action. . . . The influence of a dogma will be good or bad—that is an important criterion of dogma, with which we are not now concerned,—but if the dogma be truly maintained, it will have a moral value of some kind. Every religion, and every sect of every religion, has its characteristic form of life; and if the peculiarities of these forms of life are smoothed away by time, it is only because the type of belief to which they correspond has ceased to retain its integrity and sharpness."† It is therefore that Principal Wace rebukes the "tendency of some modern historians to undervalue the influence upon human nature of variations in religious and moral principles," as "strangely at variance with the evidence before them."‡ "The history of the world," he adds, "would appear to be in great measure a history of the manner in which religious ideas, often of an apparently abstract and subtle character, can determine the future of whole races and of vast regions of the earth. . . . The facts of history thus afford conclusive evidence that the instinct of the Christian world, or rather the instinct

* "Some Aspects of Sin," p. 20.

† "The Gospel of Life," pp. 48, 57.

‡ "The Foundations of Faith," pp. 194-198.