

that you heard of my being at Lady's ball the other night; but I can assure you that I was never at any time in the room with the dancers." "Well, my Lord," was the reply, "I can also assure you that I and my old nag are both so old that we are never in the same field with the hounds." What would the Divine Head of the Church have laid down as the rule for the fox-hunting parson and the society-loving bishop, and what is His bidding in respect of all these things to those who would take His yoke upon them and learn of Him? He cannot have left us without guidance; "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." We believe the answer to all such questions as we have suggested, and the standard by which, in the light of truth and conscience, we are to test the right or wrong, the innocence or harmfulness, the lawfulness and the expediency of our earthly pleasures, pursuits and indulgences, is found in the passage, hard to understand and still harder to accept, in which our Lord bids us to cut off the right hand or pluck out the right eye if it offend. "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it out from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell; and if thy right hand offend thee cut it off and cast it from thee, for it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell into the fire that never shall be quenched." To offend, as used in this sense, is to cause to stumble, and our Lord would teach us that if the things that seem most necessary, most a part of our being, are a hindrance to us in the heavenly way, they should forever be cast from us. Life is a march toward a goal, a journey toward a home, a narrow path often steep and difficult and beset with snares and pitfalls. There are foes on all hands, alert, treacherous, waiting for our halting, eager for our fall. To stand still is danger, to go back is death, we must ever press onward, press

toward the mark. Our own heart, our own conscience, the experience of each day, tell us what things they are that cause us to stumble, that make the upward path of duty and of service difficult or impossible and that draw us aside into the by-paths of sin where the foe of our souls waits for our destruction. We must not shirk the issue, for it is a question of life or death. We must answer each one for himself before God and his own soul the question regarding every amusement, occupation, companionship, pursuit, taste, ambition of life—is it or is it not a cause for stumbling, a hindrance, an obstacle in the path that we must tread if we would inherit eternal life? and if it is, then, even at such a sacrifice, at the cost of such suffering as the plucking out of the right eye of the body, the rending off of the right hand, Christ bids us put it from us. The loss may indeed be great, it may seem a maiming, a darkening of our lives, to do without what we have cherished and rejoiced in as the right hand and the right eye; but better this than that we should stumble and fall from the heavenly path and should be drawn down into the hell of age-long agony and remorse, to be led captive by the devil at his will, to become the slave of our own lusts and appetites, to be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, to lose our inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. "What shall it profit a man," says our Lord, "if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" and what shall it profit us, nay, how great will be our loss, if, for the sake of some passing enjoyment, the pleasure of an hour, we raise a cloud between our souls and the sunshine of our Father's love, and entangle ourselves in the yoke of Satan's bondage? We are not bidden, we are not permitted, to judge for others what is or is not for them a cause of stumbling; we have each one for himself to answer before God. As Christians we are under no bondage to the law contained in ordinances. We have