

able character of many theological doctrines, no doubt, frequently does much, unconsciously it may be to themselves, to intensify this feeling.

Candour also requires us to admit, that the unintelligent dogmatism, with which the most momentous doctrines are often asserted and defended, has exerted a very unfavourable influence in the same direction. This unfortunate temper is not confined to any class of religionists. It blossoms luxuriantly in the arid wastes of Scepticism, as well as the garden of the Church of God. If it is found among those who accept without thought, and assert without reason, all the traditions received from the fathers, it is found also in its native hatefulness among those who swallow with unquestioning faith all the current unbeliefs and cavils of their little coterie, and then pour out like water, their unintelligent scorn upon all that is pure and sacred.

Even when the opinion advanced is true, it has never been assimilated into their thinking, or made part of their mental furniture. Whatever their dogmas may be to others, they are not to them living truth, but its *fossil remains*. And when a man who is expecting his neighbour to answer calmly and intelligently a reason for his views, finds himself, instead, pelted with dead men's bones, dug from the graves of bygone controversies, it is no marvel if it fails either to sweeten his temper, or exalt his estimate of dogmatic systems.

The manner in which technical terms and abstract theological discussions are sometimes dragged into the pulpit, has helped to swell the current of prejudice. Doubtless all the truths of God's word should, in due proportion, be faithfully preached ; but it is not necessary to do this in the technical language of the schools, which the people generally do not understand. To do so may, with some, secure the preacher a cheap reputation for great profundity, but it is a sad affliction to those who are hungering for the bread of life.

The way also in which zealous theorists overstrain Scripture, to find support for a favourite view, makes a very unhappy impression on the sober-minded. Our standards recognise that not only what is expressly set down in Scripture, but what is