

there," and put a word in his mouth,—whoever he may be,—even as in the case of Balaam, aye, and even though he be a Balaam,—a word that has in it the issues of life and death (it may be) for you. God is pleased to send you a gift of priceless treasure, in an earthen vessel. He is pleased "by the foolishness of preaching"—by its unadorned simplicity, independent of all accessories of eloquence or learning or outward grace, "to save them that believe." To quote again from George Herbert—quaint old English, which should be familiar as household words to every English Churchman and Churchwoman:—

"Judge not the preacher: for he is thy judge!
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not,
God calleth preaching folly,—do not grudge
To pick out treasure from an earthen pot:
The worst speak *Something* good;—if *all* want sense,
God takes the text, and preacheth *Patience*.
He that gets patience, and the blessing that
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains."

It is dangerous, brethren, to neglect attendance on ministrations thus Christ-appointed:—it is dangerous to withhold your reverent attention when you are present, and the voice of Christ's messenger is sounding in your ear;—it is dangerous to allow yourselves to judge or criticise the manner or form of the message. St. Paul says "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self, * * * but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, till the Lord cometh." The one serious consideration for each man is—the use he is called upon to make of this ministry of preaching,—to render it effective for his own benefit and that of others.

In conclusion let us glance at some of those forms of duty which the view of the Christian Ministry may suggest as necessarily arising out of it.

First, then, use the ministrations thus offered,—use them faithfully, diligently, thankfully. Supposing one of the multitude were to have refused to take his share of the bread and fish from the hand of the apostle charged to provide him

with it,—say from Judas,—and to have said that he would rather receive it from another,—from Peter or John,—or (perhaps) directly from the Lord Himself;—would he have had any right to complain, if, for want of the rejected gift, he had fainted on his homeward way? And so the Church, acting under her Lord's commission, has appointed those officers through whose hands shall pass to each of her members his or her portion of meat in due season, and those ministrations which are to be the means of its communication. Hence it is one of the foremost duties of the Christian life to seek the appointed portion in the appointed manner. Nor have you any right to expect a supply of spiritual sustenance and growth in grace, unless you seek it in this appointed way. And this, as well in the public ministrations of the sanctuary, as in the form of private counsel and direction, which your appointed Parish Priest is commissioned to impart. Go to him with your difficulties, your doubts, your sorrows. Be assured of finding in him one whose heartfelt sympathy and ready attention will always meet your approaches to him. You will find that he values the privilege of being made use of in this way perhaps almost more highly than any other privilege he possesses. And be assured too that whatever you may confide to him will be treated as a sacred trust. You may speak to him freely and fully, as to no other; knowing that he is bound by a solemn obligation to keep your counsel inviolate. Not even a court of justice can demand the revelation of anything thus confided to him. It is important that this should be clearly known—that it is not only the Roman Church and the seal of confession to which this privilege is attached, but that it extends to all spiritual communications made to a Clergyman.

Secondly, do your part in PROVIDING FOR the ministrations of religion. This is a point on which Scripture is very plain. "They who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." Hence what is contributed to this object is to be regarded as the payment of a debt, not as a gift.

Thirdly, ENCOURAGE your Clergyman. You often hear the expression "strengthen" such a one's "hands,"—referring to Moses's friends, Aaron and Hur, who, while