

prehending logical results, who see, as it were, by inspiration, or intuition—if you prefer the word—what must be the ultimate issue of a given doctrine. A long process of reasoning is not required in their case. They *can* reason, and that most rigidly, but whilst you are slowly piling up your scholastic argument with “this” and “that” and “therefore,” they have reached the goal, and are calmly sitting with folded arms, smiling at your needless toil. The remarkable fact is that these men are almost always right. Careful subsequent examination proves that the conclusion reached is in harmony with Scripture. The reason is not difficult to find. The quick perception was really the effect of Scripture truth lodged in the mind, and perhaps long lodged there, although the rapid thinker may not have been conscious of the fact at the time. These are the men whose disagreeable lot it is to be misunderstood, and misrepresented, and evil spoken of in our churches. As a general rule this is what they get for heralding any great reformation, or bringing to the light of resurrection some long buried truth, that is to say, until they die, and then the empty compliment of having been before the age is paid to their dust.

Between these two types of mind there are many intermediate links which it would be a waste of time to particularise by characteristic epithets, even if it could be done correctly. Nor is it in the least needful to attempt this, as every one knows the fact. Indeed it is questionable whether anything short of a miracle could make all men think alike, and then it would speedily become questionable whether such a miracle could be a blessing. We are certain that it could not, and for that very reason equally certain that it will never be wrought. Heaven's miracles contemplate infinitely higher objects than a level uniformity of thought among men, which would make conversation a sleepy absurdity, discussion an impossibility, and pulpit ministration superfluous.

But does all this imply that there is any insuperable difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of Scripture respecting the nature of man, the character of God in Christ, the significance of redemption, and the future of the world and the church? No, it implies just the contrary. We have the truth of God declared to us on the points named. The lines of thought along which different minds travel, in relation to these points, will be different; but where there is an honest desire to accept revealed truth untarnished by the defiling touch of pagan philosophy, medieval tradition, or science falsely so-called, there is not the slightest doubt but that revealed truth will come home to the mind and the heart as a sublime and joyful reality. What the pulpit, therefore, has to do, ought to do, and must do, if it would discharge its duty to God and man in view of the supreme crisis to which all things are tending, is clear enough. It must lay aside with

holy and resolute determination the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, and all the other creeds of Christendom—that is to say, lay them aside, so far as the *slightest idea of doctrinal authority* is concerned—and accept and teach the plain declarations of Scripture concerning life and death, the coming of Christ, the extinction of evil, and the glorious future when, in a cleansed and happy universe, without sin or sorrow, “God will be all in all.”

The question, however, may be asked—Supposing the pulpit clothed with the moral strength necessary for this fearless testimony, would the pew endure it? We reply, undoubtedly, certainly! The devout and thoughtful in our assemblies would not only “endure” this heroic surrender of mediæval dimness for cloudless apostolic light, but would exceedingly rejoice in it. This is not a supposition founded on the fact that sooner or later truth commends itself to all its friends, but on actual experience. At first the timid and the ill-instructed—the men who “need that some one teach them again the first principles of the oracle of God”—take the alarm, and depart to some congenial fold where the orthodox echoes of many generations form the pleasant lullaby of somnolent folks; but those who are alive to the responsibilities of moral life, and are consequently anxious to be living witnesses to God and his truth, will “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.”

Of course there are men in some of our pulpits who are mentally incapable of realising the grandeur of an effort to return to apostolic doctrine at all hazards; men who, unconsciously to themselves, reveal the narrow limits of their vision by alluding contemptuously to the glorious truths of the second advent, and immortality only in Christ; and men from whom, therefore, it is absurd to expect anything in the battle which is now being waged between truth and error. But it is a fact that intelligent hearers of such men are perfectly weary of the infliction. They go to “church” or “chapel” from a mere sense of duty, and to set a good example to others, but as for life or joy in the service, the thing is unknown. We say therefore, with all emphasis, that if our ministers would become teachers and rise to the height of the great argument which the Divine book places before them; if they would throw their moral and mental strength, consecrated by the Holy Spirit, into the splendid battle for a divine immortality, and the pre-millennial return of our Lord; and if to facilitate their acquaintance with these sublime doctrines of Scripture, they would cast aside misleading formularies, they would find the best men and women of their congregations standing heartily by their side. Let the pulpit be true to God, and the pew will be true to it.—Dr. LEASK *in Rainbow.*]