

I know it may be said that the minister who would be the advocate of the Christian Faith, needs to have "the witness in himself." He should verify the truths of revealed religion in his own spiritual consciousness, and be able to point for proof to its effects on the outward life and character. I admit all this. The minister needs to take positive ground, to adopt a bold policy, to rise to a higher plane than mere negations—answering the objections of doubters. But surely, one ignorant of these doubts and difficulties is poorly prepared to act as a Great Heart, to champion pilgrims past Doubting Castle; and do valiant battle in their behalf with the giants and evil genii of unbelief.

It may be argued that it is unreasonable to expect this of ordinary ministers. Usually without previous advantages of leisure and culture, they pass through a somewhat hurried and crowded curriculum of theological study. They then at once enter on their work with its incessant duties, distractions and cares, allowing few or no opportunities for original research or varied study. How then, it is asked, can they meet and anticipate all objections, prospective or possible that actually take the range of the Encyclopædia?

This preparation it would be unjust to require, and unnecessary as a rule to possess. The number of original thinkers or inventors are few. The great and useful class, is of middle men, who apply what others discover. I have accordingly not insisted on the importance of a learned, but merely of an educated ministry. And surely, it is not too much to ask that those who profess to be religious teachers in this educated age, should at least know where to look for information on these subjects, how to acquire it, and in what way to make use of it.

Some there may be who regard all this train of argument as making the efficiency of the Ministry rest rather on the "wisdom of men" than "the power of God." They will remind us that though there were "schools of the Prophets" in Israel, they produced not even a single prophet of any note—hardly even a minor prophet. And they do not allow us to forget that the Apostles were "ignorant and unlearned men." We are, however, speaking in this connection, not of Prophets and Apostles, but of "pastors and teachers." And those who quote so frequently that single text about the Apostles, might at least, one should suppose, quote the whole of it. Those that heard them, "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." The three years they were domesticated with the Great Teacher as household pupils, they constituted in fact his ecclesiastical family—furnished ample ministerial training. If it could be said that acquaintance with an eminent individual was "equivalent to a liberal education," such intercourse with our Blessed Lord was better than any modern course in divinity.

But we are to remember that the Apostles were called to be witnesses to facts. The foundation of Christianity as in Judaism, was laid in facts of the supernatural and Divine that took place during the lifetime of a whole generation; and to which they were called to testify. John, whom men called the mystic, refers to this in the beginning of his first Epistle; and there is evidently in his mind no mysticism about the matter. It is well known that men unversed in books and theories, are the best adapted to bear witness to facts! But, besides the facts, there was what we may call the philosophy of the Christian system—the bearing of these facts on the individual and society, not only on this "visible diurnal sphere," but on the spiritual realm and the future state. To qualify them for this, the Apostles had the overruling and inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit. Yet notwithstanding all this, making their office provisional and exceptional, Christianity like Judaism was established mainly through the instrumentality of an educated man. Moses and Paul had all the learning of their times. The Hebrew lawgiver when he exchanged the possible sceptre of universal empire for a shepherd's crook under the shadow of Sinai, a mountain that was to become strangely associated with his history and destiny, and which he would make the symbol and synonyme of the Divine law, for forty years held converse with God and nature. So, St. Paul was a Grecian by culture; and took besides, ere he entered on his work, years of retirement for study. And ever since in the history of the Church