

God at all. All religions are supposed by the Statutes to be on a perfect equality, each of them being understood to be placed in no better, and at the same time in no worse position than every other; and yet the suit went on the ground that the Civil Courts had a right to interfere in the internal management and discipline of the Church, and to decide on the propriety or impropriety of the most purely spiritual acts of her officers and private members. And if the Civil Courts had a right to take such a step with regard to the Church, they would have an equal right to take the same course with all the sects and denominations throughout the country, whereby an immense increase in the Judiciary would necessarily ensue, and the State would assume the entire control over all religious matters.

But if it could have been possible that the judgment could have been given for the plaintiff, we hesitate not to say that so grave is the nature of the case that the whole Church of the Dominion would have to rise as one man, and either oppose so unrighteous a decision, or contend for such an alteration of the Statutes as would place the Church in a position to exercise her spiritual functions in a manner perfectly free and untrammelled. In England, it is not so much that the Church and the State are united, as that, what is now a legal fiction was once more or less true, the State is the Church and the Church is the State; so that, in a sense, all the Courts in England are, or at least were, Church Courts, some spiritual, some temporal; so that questions of the kind we are considering might very properly be brought before any of them according to the object sought to be attained—whether ecclesiastical censure or civil disability. But here in Canada we have certainly for a number of years labored under the impression that the Church was perfectly free to exercise all her spiritual functions, without let or hindrance from the State; and should it have turned out that we had been laboring under a delusion, that the Civil Courts in Canada could compel a clergyman to administer the Holy Communion in cases where they might think fit, it would then be high time to make a full inquiry about the matter with a view to further action.

It is no part of our business any more than it was the business of the Court even to touch upon the merits of the particular case we are considering. Whether Mr. Forneri was what Mr. Dunnett said he was, whether Mr. Dunnett was what Mr. Forneri said he was—the less we touch upon these points the more clearly shall we be convinced of the impressiveness of the main question itself. Whether Mr. Forneri was right or wrong in refusing to administer the Holy Communion to Mr. Dunnett is a matter for the bishop of the diocese, and no one else, to determine. Whether or not Mr. Dunnett was unjustly deprived of a seat in the Synod would be for that Synod to decide. We are only concerned with any power the Civil Courts might claim to possess in interfering with the spiritual action of the Church; and unless this question were satis-

factorily settled, it would be in vain that bishops, clergy, and Synods should attempt to carry on the Church's work.

The judgment of the Vice Chancellor determined that the Court of Chancery had no jurisdiction in the case, it being of a purely spiritual nature. But notwithstanding this, the defendant was left to pay his own costs! This part of the judgment is decidedly puzzling to those not learned in the proceedings of the Law Courts. We confess to have been also very considerably puzzled—after a long string of arguments and cases had been gone through, all powerfully conveying to one focus, viz., that the Court had no business to interfere in the matter at all, to find the Vice Chancellor entering into the merits of the case itself, and almost undoing the previous part of his judgment. The inquiry was certainly suggested as whether it is the custom in that Court to give a full and decided opinion on question in reference to which the Court itself has decided it has no jurisdiction. If this is the first instance of the kind, it constitutes an exceedingly unfortunate precedent. If it is only in accordance with the usual practice of the Court, all we need say is that we believe such practice finds no analogy in the procedure of the English Law Courts—not even in the *obiter dicta* of which we have lately heard so much.

DEVOTIONAL AND RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

A PAPER READ AT A CONFERENCE IN TORONTO, ONT., IN NOVEMBER, 1877.

By the Rev. Isaac Brock, M.A., Co-Rector of St. Peter's Church, Sherbrooke.

If I rightly understand the subject assigned to me, the word "religious" is intended to describe, not books on religion generally (a boundless subject), but books helpful to the religious life; books calculated to promote the growth, or to guide and guard the development of that life of God in our souls, the germ of which the Holy Ghost implanted in us, when by Holy Baptism we were incorporated into Christ's mystical body, the Holy Catholic Church.

So that while the word *Devotional* points rather perhaps to manuals of devotion, the two words together "*devotional and religious*" open a somewhat wider field for our consideration at this conference, embracing not merely devotional manuals, but all such books (devotional and religious) as under the presence and power of the Holy Ghost may prove, in a greater or less degree, of use to us in our Christian life, more particularly in that department of it, upon which its vitality depends—our intercourse with God.

The brethren will kindly remember that my remarks on the subject before us must necessarily be only *suggestive*: what may be helpful to one, may not be found helpful to another. In a conference of this kind, therefore, I only feel warranted in offering suggestions for the consideration of the brethren, hoping that the progress of the discussion will elicit, from older and more advanced brethren in the Church of God, counsels and suggestions far more weighty than mine.

I might occupy the whole of my allotted time by enumerating a number of devotional and religious books which have obtained a transient or permanent hold on the church. Such an enumeration, however, could hardly be a profitable employment of your time and mine. I take it that you do not ask from me to-day (even if I were competent to give it), a mere catalogue of devotional and religious books. You doubtless expect me to make a selection; and if that selection is in part the result of my own experience or choice, you will bear in mind that in reference to all books *except two*, I am only as I have said

offering suggestions; and even in reference to the *mode* of using, as books of devotion, those excepted two, again I can only offer suggestions which may or may not be practically and generally useful.

I shall incidentally in the course of my remarks refer to several devotional and religious books, but this will be chiefly in connexion with, and in subordination to, four great books of devotion and religion. Four great books:

I. The first stands alone. The unapproachable glory of inspiration places THE HOLY BIBLE as a devotional and religious book in a position by itself.

II. The next book is only second to the Holy Bible, and occupies also a position unique as a book of devotion, OUR ENGLISH BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

The other two that I venture to select out of scores of ancient and modern books of devotion have been and are prized by hundreds of thousands.

III. The first is a voice that comes to us from the middle ages from the calm of the monastery of St. Agnes in the Diocese of Cologne: the work of a Roman Catholic priest and monk, THE Imitation of CHRIST, by St. Thomas a Kempis.

IV. And the other is a familiar voice that comes to us from our own time, from a country parish in the Diocese of Winchester: the work of a holy and humble priest of our English Church, who eleven and a half years ago entered into rest, THE CHRISTIAN YEAR, by the sainted Keble.

I. THE HOLY BIBLE.

I need not occupy your time by dwelling on the importance, in reference to our spiritual life, of a devotional study of the Holy Scriptures—One thought only—out of our union to God in Christ sealed in Holy Baptism, sustained in the Holy Eucharist, grows the blessed privilege of intercourse with God. We will address Him: this we do by Prayer and Praise. He will address us: this He does by His Word. Where there is living union there must be intercourse, God must speak to us, we to God.

Let me give a few hints which may perhaps help us in our devotional reading of the Holy Scriptures.

1. Let us realize the presence of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as we read His Word. The collect for the second Sunday in Advent, or for St. Mark's day, or a short prayer of our own for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, may well be used before our devotional reading of the Scriptures, may serve to impress upon us the great thought—*God is speaking to us in His Word.*

2. Let us follow as far as possible the church's order in reading the Scriptures, especially in reference to the feast and festivals, and seasons of the church's year. It needs not that we read *all* the church prescribes: we can take portions thereof in order.

3. Arrange for this devotional reading early in the day, if possible. In any case do not let it take its chance. The daily bread is *given not snatched.*

4. Study the Word with marginal references, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

5. Study carefully the contents of passages which especially strike you.

6. Gather *principles* for the Christian life from Old Testament rules.

7. Learn from the Word the *different sides* of God's truth, call to mind that word of St. Paul, "the manifold wisdom of God." God's Election and Man's Free Will: Regeneration in Baptism, Conversion in mature years: Evangelical truth and Church truth. Do not ignore either side, though you may fail to see the harmony.

8. If possible, let us always carry away from the portion of God's Word which we read as a part of our devotional exercises, at least one lesson, one thought which we may recur to, and dwell upon during the day. For many other hints and rules on this subject, I must refer you to a work by Dean Goulburn, entitled "An Introduction to the Devotional Study of the Holy Scriptures," where also you will find many illustrations of this important matter.

The mention of Dean Goulburn leads me to notice in passing his well-known books on our present subject, "Thoughts on Personal Religion" and "The Pursuit of Holiness;" Devotional and