

vide flour unless grain is cast in it, we are not denying the goodness of the mill. Its province is not to create but to grind. Now the mind of man is the mill that grinds, the eye that sees.

The greatest teachers of religion and the writers of the Christian Scriptures do not deny reason, but only condemn its abuse. They assume the reality and function of reason, and make frequent appeals to it. Lacordaire declared that "God had given us reason to show that He had no fear of reason;" and Vinet observes with equal truth that "if Reason can do nothing it cannot even prove its own importance. If it can prove this," he says, "it can do something." And the same writer remarks: "Reason is not the efficient cause of the sentiments which are begotten within us: it can only bring us face to face with the facts, and enable them to speak to us." A man is not a better Christian, or a better anything, because he acts without reflection. The most thoughtful man is the best man, the most competent man. The Christian should be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him, and if he would do so, he must beware of disparaging or neglecting his highest and noblest endowment.

2. But further, if a man would hope to attain a right opinion, *he must have a supreme regard to truth*. It is a thing quite easy to say, and most necessary to be continually kept in mind. Neither prejudice, nor self-interest, nor yet any form of party-feeling must be allowed to stand in the way. We are, of course, aware that in the absolute sense of the words it is practically impossible for us to meet such a re-

quirement. But it is not therefore unnecessary or useless to insist upon the duty. Even if we are conscious of many failures, it is only by keeping a lofty standard before our eyes that we can hope in any manner to rise above ourselves. And so it is only by keeping before our minds the attainment of perfect truth as an object never to be lost sight of that we can hope to escape from any of the falsehoods or confusions in which we are apt to become involved. And this in spite of the three great enemies of truth: *prejudice, self-interest and party*. Let us, for a moment, consider these obstacles to the attainment of truth.

(1) First there is *Prejudice*. What does this mean? It means our preconceived opinions, whether true or false; and we have no need to start with the assumption or the presumption that they are probably false. Most of our convictions, especially our practical principles of life, are probably true in the main. But we have no right to lay this down as certain. On the contrary, when we come to the investigation of any principle, we must start with the assumption that our previous judgments must be either verified or abandoned. If they are true, then the most searching investigation will only confirm them. We must at least bring them face to face with acknowledged facts, sincerely, honestly, earnestly, or as honestly as we can. If they are compatible with the facts and harmonize with them, it is well. We shall return to them with fresh confidence, with deeper conviction. If they are incompatible with the facts, if our opinions and undeniable facts cannot stand to-