

there was a regular provision for religious instruction in the time of the patriarchs might be inferred from the vow which Jacob made at Bethel, that of all that God might give him, he would surely consecrate a tenth to God. There could be no doubt on the subject when they came down to the date of the establishment of the Jewish system. Under it there was undoubtedly provision for instruction in Divine things. Only a few of the priests were required to be in Jerusalem at any one time for the purpose of performing sacrificial duties, and the rest were resident in the cities allotted them, where they were doubtless employed in the work of instructing the people in religious truths. Little was said about this part of the office of the priests. But if God required parents, under severe penalties, to attend to the religious instruction of their children, would He not require the same diligence in the work of teaching from those whom he set apart as His representatives? The priests were the custodians of the law, and as such, at stated seasons, had to read the Scriptures in the presence of all the people. So, when Jehoshaphat wished to revive religion in the land, he sent priests through all the cities of Judah. It was, doubtless, part of the priestly office to instruct and convert the people. The priest is spoken of as the messenger of the Lord, just as in apostolic times the minister of a Church was called the "Angel," which is the Greek word for messenger. The work of the Jewish priest was similar to that of the Christian minister. The strictly priestly work—that of offering sacrifice—was suited to the age, which was characterized by limited knowledge of Divine things. But that age has passed away, and it is the glory of the Church of the present day that it has outgrown the necessity of these emblematic helps. It was, continued the preacher, the glory of the Church with which they were connected that they could do without these helps, and endeavoured to bring the mind into immediate connection with the truth. For a Church in the present day to resort to ritualism was the same as for a man to go back to the use of crutches after recovering the use of his limbs. He spoke at some length in opposition to the theory which is held by some, that the work of teaching was confined to the prophets, whose habits, he said, were migratory, and whose office was very similar to that of modern Evangelists. The prophets were men raised up to meet emergencies, to make up for deficiencies in the work of instructing the people, and, in times of neglect and indifference on the part of the priests, to supply what should have been done by them. As a writer had observed, the great distinction between the prophets and the priests was inspiration. The regular religious instruction of the people was no work of the prophets. The agency of the prophets in the kingdom of Judah was only of a subsidiary kind. In the text there was an awful exposure of the evils of popular ignorance of Divine things, and a denunciation of those who were mainly responsible for that ignorance. The necessity of a correct knowledge of sacred things is as great now as it ever was. The knowledge of God can only be maintained by the labours of pious and able men, stationed permanently among the people. A minister must be pious, as the first condition of usefulness, but that is not all that is required; he must also be able to teach—not only capable of guiding, but also of creating public opinion. If he is behind the age, he cannot command the respect and confidence of his people. In the present age, and especially in a young country like this, a minister of the Gospel must have his mind fully furnished, and be able to confute error whenever it may arise. It is indispensable that a man be truly religious; but, superadded to this spiritual qualification, there must