

and more showy gifts of pulpit oratory. Public audiences have often been worked up to a pitch of fury and led to the performance of deeds of atrocity and fanaticism by the popular demagogue. Feelings and sentiments of patriotism too have, not unfrequently been instilled into large masses of people, as when the mighty orator, who wielded at will the fierce democracy of Athens, thundered out the words which led the vast assembly he had addressed to shout:—"Let us march against the foe." In this instance, as in the great majority of a similar kind, the effect for good of such sudden impulses is very much like the morning cloud and the early dew when it goeth away.

The position of Canon Liddon is not his alone; it is we believe that which is directed to be taken in the New Testament. It is especially the position of our own Church, and for the carrying out of which the parochial system was doubtless adopted. It has been that of all the most successful and most durable efforts of the Church in all ages; and we may add that it is the position more or less assumed by all the leaders of the denominational sects, when anything like permanency is aimed at. For not the production of a transient emotion or the building up of the reputation of a popular preacher is the object of that organized community we call the Christian Church, but the training up of individual souls in their most holy faith. Nor is it possible for the Christian minister to obey the apostolic injunction to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering," unless we have more or less opportunity to deal with each case according to its demands.

None can for a moment suppose that Canon Liddon would affix any slight whatever to sermons from the pulpit. He would scarcely have cultivated that species of oratory so successfully, if it did not rank very high in his estimation. Nor can his words be interpreted so to derogate in the least from the importance of the public prayers and praises of the sanctuary. He makes no reference to the priest as the leader of the devotions of the people, but to the minister as the watchman, the overseer, the pastor of his flock, aiming at the cultivation of the Christian Life, and the production of Christian graces.

The allusion that has been made to the conversions on the day of Pentecost and to other similar effects produced by public addresses to large collections of people is nothing to the purpose; because, as we have just remarked, the Canon has nothing to say against the greatest indulgence in sermonizing; and also because these effects, astounding as they were, would no doubt have been just as transient as they were astounding, had not the machinery of the Church been brought to bear upon the converts, in watering the seed sown, in leading them on to the higher branches of Christianity, in training and educating them for further attainments in godliness, and in the production of precious and acceptable fruit, worthy of Him, to

whom they had now begun to dedicate themselves.

We regret to find that a contemporary, with whom we are most frequently in entire agreement, has, in an editorial, entitled, "Waste not, want not," criticized unfavorably the Canon's letter. And this, the writer of the article appears to do on two grounds. First, because greater economy may be the result of enlarging the sphere of the pastor's ministrations; and secondly, because he thinks Canon Liddon's remarks point too much to a "tendency to induce men to lean too much on their spiritual directors, and too little to their own prayerful and fervid exertions." But surely to talk of economising in the present state of the Church is out of place, for it would tend to repress all expansion; and an economy, such as that, would, we opine, be neither more nor less than a very unwise and impolitic parsimony; because we know of no part of the Lord's vineyard where the labourers are anything but "few," while the harvest, in comparison with the number of labourers, is everywhere "plenteous." And as for leaning too much on "spiritual directors," we would ask, how "the good shepherd can be on the alert to build up the wounded heart, to awaken the slumbering conscience, or soothe the troubled mind," without a personal contact with individual cases, as well as by addressing his people through other recognized channels, and when supported by the enthusiasm of numbers.

#### THE INFIDEL TENDENCY OF THE AGE.

The proneness of the human mind to extremes is no where more fully illustrated than in the tendency of the present age towards infidelity. While those parts of Christendom which embrace the Roman and some of the Oriental communions are engulfed in the vortex of superstition, only in part aroused from the slumber of ages by the occasional addition of another and a larger wave of the swelling flood, the other parts where the human mind has become emancipated from the thralldom in which it had been held, have been steadily advancing by the way of evolution theories and agnosticism towards, not a chilling Deism only, but the coldest and most heartless Atheism. And so it has happened that superstition and rationalism are the whirlpool and the rock towards which, for many centuries, large portions of the Christian world have been drifting.

On the continent of Europe, as well as among some bodies in England and America, Protestantism has almost everywhere rushed into the arms of Rationalism. It may be that men who are in love with empty names and who shut their eyes to events that are transpiring everywhere around them, may stigmatize this as an assertion of too sweeping a character. In support of it we would advert to some historical truths, were it not that those to whom we refer do not hesitate to ignore all his-

tory when it answers their purpose to do so. Facts as they exist however at the present moment are not so easily set aside; and among these it cannot be denied that in most of the localities where, during the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Institutes of Calvin and the dogmas of the Augusburg Confession, so extensively swayed the minds of the French and German speaking people, it is now a very uncommon thing to find a congregation that has not departed from the evangelical interpretation of those documents as standards of their faith. Neology has almost everywhere triumphed over theology. In Geneva, the memory of Rousseau is more honored than that of Calvin; and in Berlin the inspiration of Kant and Schelling is regarded as not differing materially from that of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Among the English races, scarcely any of the Protestant bodies have entirely escaped the tendency to depart from the old ways, by watering down or keeping out of sight the Evangelical teaching of the New Testament, and especially in regard to the presence of Christ with his Church.

The tendency to mediævalism, shown by considerable numbers of the laity in our church and by a few of our clergy, has sometimes caused intense feeling. Perhaps this feeling would scarcely have existed at all, had it not been that the tendency we speak of has manifested itself in the use of external symbols, which either warmly attract, or furiously and bitterly repel the minds of the masses. But however this may be, the evil of cultivating mediævalism is not to be compared with the tendency in the opposite direction, already extensively seen in the Church, and abundantly developed in most of the non-conformist bodies of England and America.

It is but a branch of this terrible evil that is found in the failure to see a Divine authority and a Divine agency in the ordinances of the Christian Church. And it has been very cogently asked:—"Is not the overlooking of the truth that, the ordained ministers of Christ are his Ambassadors, and the sacraments important channels of grace, the chief cause of this fearful departure from evangelical truth?" When men doubt whether the Holy Ghost is in the Church; whether there is any authority or any influence connected with Holy Orders; and when they deny that the sacraments are anything more than signs and memorials; it is hardly going a step further to doubt whether there is any especial exercise of God's providence in his government of the world; whether He Himself has any power or any right to interfere with what we call the laws of nature; or whether the benefits of prayer are anything more than a reflex influence it exerts upon the human soul.

The infidelity of the day is abundantly fostered by the failure to realize the Divine presence in the Church. And this arises from rejecting the teaching of the Bible. Men talk largely about the Bible as the rule of Faith and the standard of Truth; but many are inclin-