

the monastic system which has already been condemned at the bar of history, they can hardly supply the deficiencies of casuistry or furnish the kind of instruction that is fitted to build up the highest type of Christian character. Both casuistry and ascetism are but caricatures of the sane, wholesome and sublime ethical teaching of the New Testament.

Nor must it be supposed that the defects of the Roman Catholic system of casuistry are caused solely by erroneous doctrines regarding the church and the sacraments. These no doubt play a large part in producing the distortion of sound teaching which characterizes it. But a Protestant system of casuistry would be little better as a means of educating conscience. The effort to elaborate such a system along Protestant lines has not often been attempted. But there is at least one such attempt made by a man as capable as could well have been found, that by Bishop Jeremy Taylor in his *Doctor Dubitantium*, but it never accomplished any good and is now well nigh forgotten. There is now, and has always been, of course, a call for ethical teaching in the Christian church, and no branch of it can afford to neglect this element in its instruction of the people. But it is the education in great principles rather than in minute details that is needed, the stimulation of the conscience to cherish the highest ideals rather than to occupy itself with hair-splitting distinctions or the excuses that may be pleaded in justification of doubtful proceedings. There is need for discipline in the church, but it should be restricted to dealing with such scandals as bring dishonor on the cause rather than to the regulation of the petty details of every man's business or pleasure. And the best discipline of all would be the creation of such a lofty and spiritual atmosphere of public opinion in the church as would lead to the automatic purification of its membership by the withdrawal of such as were living godless and unworthy lives. In such an atmosphere the average conception of duty would steadily rise and we should find a true ethical development in the church, a clearer sense of the difference between right and wrong, and a keener insight into the as yet unsolved problem of civic duty and social philanthropy.