

teaching are mischievous. At one of the most solemn moments in our public worship, when the minister is about to dispense the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, he generally reads Paul's words to the church at Corinth, beginning thus: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread," etc. Paul was not present at that first supper; yet usually we read his account of it, not that of the Apostle Matthew, though he had been present, nor the account in either of the other two synoptic gospels. It is noteworthy how the words of Paul, who was as one born out of due time in comparison with the original twelve apostles, are taken as best suiting our purpose, and as being no less authoritative than the words of the synoptic evangelists. And no wonder, for to that Church at Corinth he wrote (1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38), "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant." Paul had a commission from his Lord to teach and preach in His name; of his commission we have three narratives in the Acts of the Apostles. We can well understand, therefore, his claim to be in no way inferior to the very chiefest of the apostles. Now the teaching of the twelve had been made authoritative by their Lord when He first sent them forth (see Matt. x. 19, 20, 40), "But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. . . . He that receiveth you receiveth me." In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself has left us a pattern of relying on Scripture, on all Scripture, when He answered the tempter (Matt. iv. 4), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

In short, the man who discredits the authority of this blessed book is not a genuine Protestant. For in proportion as he lowers the authority of the written Word, practically he exalts the authority of some preacher; that is, of course, till the point is reached at which the preacher also is discredited as much as the book which he professes to expound and apply. And as a matter of observation, we may assert that where the Church of Rome is gaining strength, it is where Protestants have ceased to feed their souls upon the Word of God, or, like the Israelites with the manna, have come to loathe it as "light bread." In some parts of Scandinavia, where no dissent from the Lutheran Church was tolerated till lately, the church had become very dead, and efforts to restore life were frowned down or violently arrested. And now, when religious liberty is so far secured, the Church of Rome is busy attempting to obtain a firm footing for itself. Again, in the mixed populations of Holland and Switzerland, the same attempt is being vigorously made. Some of those who have been led by bold and able guides to suppose that the Bible has a great deal of myth and error in it are naturally distrustful of their own ability to separate the chaff from the wheat, the grains of gold from the sand; or else they are too indolent to make the attempt. And the priesthood allure them with the offer of a living infallible teacher, whose messengers they are; and with a guarantee from him that all shall be well with those who entrust themselves to him.

We may thus calculate that Romanism and Rationalism play into each other's hands. If we shrink from superstition, we ought to be led humbly to receive the revelation of God in Christ, which He has condescended to make in Scripture. But if we confound the Word of God with the inventions of men, and spurn the authority of both alike, we shall soon feel painfully the want of some authority and guide, and so fall back into the hands of the priesthood. Christ promises to those who embrace Him as their Saviour, that He will send them His spirit to guide them into all truth. But how can we expect His spirit to do anything in our hearts to the disparagement of what men have spoken and written as they were moved by the Holy Spirit?

No doubt it was the reverence and esteem for the Bible which turned the balance of interest in Europe

to the side of Protestantism. From the sixteenth century and onward, circumstances which I cannot at present discuss left the Latin races of the South in the communion of the Church of Rome, and along with them a large part of the Teutonic races in Central Europe. Now it was this part of the European population who had the ruling power, the wealth, and the refinement of the civilized world in their hands. You know how wonderfully all this came to be reversed. I leave Russia out of account, although it is a factor of tremendous importance; but it is difficult to assign its position in the struggle between the Church of Rome and the Churches of the Reformation. Apart from Russia, then, it is the nations of Central Europe, and still more those of Northern Europe, to whom the ruling power and the wealth and the refinement at present belong. And why? Because their intellect and their conscience were awakened up, were strengthened, were trained and disciplined by the Word of God. The highest benefit of all this process is the saving knowledge of the truth; but many other benefits have accrued to the Protestant nations. Multitudes who may not have been made partakers of the grace of God, so as to become true members of Christ, have found the advantages of the atmosphere in which they now live. If there were nothing else, the reading of the Bible with attention and reverence exerts an extraordinary power upon a community. Besides, the desire to read the Bible, and the habit of reading it, ensure that men generally learn to read in a manner and degree which are unknown where there is no reading of this book. The contrast between Roman Catholic and Protestant nations, in respect of the numbers in them who can read, is astounding.

Forty or fifty years ago the whole of our theological students who went to the Continent did not go to Germany to study there. Some went to that most interesting Protestant region, French Switzerland, and studied, not only books, but also a people with whom we Scots have many links of resemblance and connection. I should be glad that this were the case again. I think that there are important advantages to be gained from taking a session in the city of Calvin, at the hall in which Merle d'Aubigne taught, from gaining a mastery of the French language, and from studying the questions of the gospel, the papacy, and the unbelieving and the Socialist movements, as you would have the opportunity of doing there.

The Obligation of Usefulness.*

BY REV. ADDISON P. FOSTER, D.D.

THE RIGHT AMBITION IS TO BE USEFUL.

Many a human impulse has acquired a bad name because it has been misdirected or uncontrolled. This is peculiarly true of ambition. The ambition of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Napoleon, has brought the feeling into disrepute. But ambition in itself is God-given, an element of greatness and essential to usefulness. One without ambition is nerveless and inefficient. His life is barren; he simply vegetates. Ambition is the motive force. It drives us through life as steam propels the railroad train. But as a train must run on a track to avoid disaster, so an ambitious life must be strictly held to a certain course.

Christ's disciples were ambitious for pre-eminence. The mother of James and John, like other Jews of the time, thought that the Messianic kingdom was to be a magnificent display of earthly authority with pomp and splendor surpassing that of the Oriental monarchies of that day. She desired that when Christ sat down on His throne of world-wide dominion, His two ministers might be her two sons, each occupying a seat at His side and sharing His power. It was a dream of greatness, purely worldly in its conception. It was an ambition earthy and unchristian.

This selfish and narrow ambition breaks in upon Christ's aims and ideals with a singular jar. He was striding forward to Jerusalem with an absorption of thought and an eagerness of desire that amazed and affrighted His disciples. In His stern eye, set lip and steady forward tread there was something they could not understand and that suggested to them a crisis, perhaps a revolution. What did it mean? Christ answered their unspoken inquiry. It means death,

*An Exposition based on (Mark x. 35-45—Luke xix. 11-27); in the Bible Study Union Course on "The Teachings of Christ."