

factor of the truths to be taught, and of the nature of man, for whose benefit they were intended. Let us consider the latter first.

I. The truths to be conveyed were uncommon, spiritual, and relating chiefly to a higher state of being. The persons who were to receive them were unapprehensive, worldly, and little impressible by didactic force of truth. Parables were chosen as the best key to unlock our understanding, closed against heavenly and eternal things, by their being admirably fitted to impress the affections, and to live in the memory.

II. The temporary and local reasons which induced our Lord to adopt parabolic teachings were, that, 1. He might not frustrate his great design in coming into the world, either by forcing light upon the Jews, to prevent his crucifixion by their conversion, or hastening it prematurely by exasperating them to take vengeance upon him for the plainness and severity of his reproof.

2. That he might accomplish his own purpose in saying the world, and that his Father might accomplish his, in the destruction of his enemies.

"Therefore," said he, "speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxing gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." This is the only prophecy in the Old Testament which is repeated six times in the New.

There is one inference which I shall derive from the whole, and that is, the lawfulness of fiction as a medium of conveying not only moral, but religious instruction. Considering the weak and baby-like prejudices which are entertained by very grave, learned, and even devout personages, on this point, and the invectives and reproaches which have been cast upon individuals, who in our own times have laboured to bring back fiction to its legitimate province and high vocation as a minister of truth, I shall be excused if I dwell a little upon it in this place, and on an occasion so favourable to its introduction.

An indecent outcry has been raised against religious stories, and inventions constructed for the purpose of reproving vice, exposing cant, and recommending the doctrines and the spirit of the Gospel; and in some weak persons it has operated as a sweeping interdiction of all works of the imagination, at least in prose. Now let us inquire for a moment whether reason or Scripture warrants such a result.

The fault of a tale, in my view, is not that it is a tale, but that it is immoral or irreligious. Some persons who are horror struck at prose fictions readily enough admit into their families poetry, and specimens of the fine arts; the great question is not whether a man writes poetry or prose, but whether works of fiction, as such, are or are not a laudable and happy medium of conveying useful, and even spiritual knowledge. By works of fiction, I understand all such works as profess to illustrate moral and natural truth by the aid of the imagination; and it is distinctly to be observed, that it is no part of the inquiry whether they are in nature or not; whether they are historic, dramatic, descriptive, or allegorical; whether they have, or have not, individually, a good or evil tendency. We have nothing to do with the execution of any one work; but with the simple principle on which all works of this class necessarily depend. It is apparent, then, that before the question can be answered in the negative, we must be prepared to sacrifice the very best and most harmless of prose fictions, we must abandon at once and forever all the walks of

poetry, music, painting, sculpture.—all must be renounced. On this principle we may seriously ask, how are we to dispose of those portions of the Holy Scriptures which must be affected by it? They contain, as we have seen, fables, poetry, and parables. These, I think, add materially to the beauty and pathos of the Divine Word; but this opinion must necessarily be influenced by the way in which we determine on the principle, that truth may be lawfully presented to the mind by means of fiction, for they are evidently fictitious. Finally, I desire to ask, if the imagination may not be employed for these and similar purposes, why was the imagination given? and, if the works of imagination are to fall under the ban of religion? If Fiction is never to approach her hallowed altar, nor weave one wreath to decorate her votaries; if Truth frown her into distance, and to every useful and beneficial purpose, she is henceforth to be reprobate; she cannot choose but ally herself with irreligion, with profaneness, with error, and with every power of darkness. Henceforth only those works of the imagination are to be deemed legitimate that are devoted to the corruption of the heart and the debasement of the character. The Fenelons, the Miltons, the Cowpers, the Bunyans, with a thousand other illustrious names, some of which I should even tremble to adduce, upon the principle that fiction is not to be made the medium of moral and religious instruction,—all these illustrious individuals, instead of being the benefactors, have been the enemies of mankind. Whatever is fictitious in their writings ought to have had no purpose in view, or that purpose should have been evil. It is monstrous to construct a tale—to insinuate a truth—the entertaining and the useful must now be divorced. But my attention is arrested—a Judge interposes to decide the case, and to cover with confusion those who would devote to the enemy of souls one whole faculty of the human mind, and all the class of sensations and impressions which it creates—a faculty on which much of the beauty and energy of the character must depend. A voice addresses me, and it is his "who spake as never man spake,"—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"**APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.**"—It is related of the venerable Dr. Pilmoor, of Philadelphia, that after he had become a minister of the Protestant Church, he was in a large mixed company, among whom were some of his old friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when he rather tauntingly indulged himself in self-gratulation on the promise of Christ's presence with his ministers of the regular apostolic succession, of which he had the happiness to be one. An old friend, who had often heard him preach in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, when he was a plain Methodist preacher, said to him, "Dr. P., permit me to ask you one question, as a Christian man. When I heard you, as a Methodist preacher, preach to the multitude on the race ground, the judge's stand being your pulpit, was Christ with you or not?" The doctor paused, and then emphatically answered, "Yes, if ever he has been with me, he was with me then." His old friend was satisfied and so were the company. It was the candid confession of a plain, honest man—which plain, honest men knew how to appreciate.—*The Rev. Dr. Emery's Episcopal Controversy.*

AN IRISH PATRIARCH.—The June number of the Wesleyan Magazine notices the death of the Rev. Gideon Ousley, one of the most extraordinary men of the first Centenary of Methodism, more than *threescore* of which he lived to see. He was liberally educated, self-denying, and zealous; preaching to the native Irish in their vernacular tongue, on all occasions, in season and out of season.