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Wycliffe

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

The History and Principles

—OF—

Wycliffe College.

AN ADDRESS TO THE ALUMNI

—BY THE—

Rev. Principal Sheraton, D.D.

OCTOBER 7th, 1891.

TORONTO :

THE J. E. BRYANT COMPANY (LIMITED)

1891.

462
22/4/92

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ADDRESS TO THE ALUMNI, OCT. 7, 1891,

BY THE

REV. PRINCIPAL SHERATON, D.D.

THE opening of this new and commodious building furnishes a fitting opportunity for a brief review of the past history of our College and the reassertion of the principles it is intended to embody and to propagate. It is fitting to do so, both that we may be stirred up to gratitude and devout thanksgiving to Him without whose guiding and sustaining hand we had in vain attempted to build, and that we may be reminded of the trust committed to us, and, taking courage from the past, may go forward with increased ardour and hopefulness in our work.

THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE.

The very origin of the College is a proof of its vitality and a pledge of its stability. For it was not the result of any formal ecclesiastical deliberation, but the outcome of the spontaneous and voluntary action of earnest Christian people, loyal members of our communion, chiefly laymen, together with a small band of earnest and faithful clergymen.

This informal spontaneity of inception has been characteristic of the most useful enterprises of the Christian Church in missions, in education, in the circulation of the Scriptures, and in the rescue of the sinning and the suffering. It is the best guarantee of success, because it is the strongest evidence of vitality. It marks that which proceeds out of the very heart and inmost being of the Church, and not merely arises from the routine of formal deliberation and official procedure.

The situation in this diocese and throughout Canada was most serious. We were feeling the blighting influence of the mediæval reaction which has torn and weakened the Mother Church. It became necessary to withstand the growing sacerdotalism by means of organization and agitation. The association formed for this purpose battled with the evil courageously. More and more it was apparent that the contest lay between the majority of the Protestant laity of our communion on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a large section of the clergy who had ceased to be in sympathy with the principles and spirit of the Reformation. The conviction grew that the only adequate remedy must be found in the provision of distinctive Evangelical teaching in the training and education of candidates for the sacred ministry, and out of this conviction, deepened by thought and prayer, originated Wycliffe College.

The initiation of the work evoked, as is well known, strong and persistent opposition. It was alleged that it was opposed to the law and order of our Church, and the authority of the Bishop was invoked to arrest it. Charges of disloyalty and lawlessness were persistently alleged. Now all educational work, including the training of theo-

logical students, has ever been carried on in the Church of England by the voluntary action of her members, as distinguished from the corporate action of the Church. In the elasticity of this voluntaryism she has found her chief counter action to the inflexibility of an Establishment and her most reliable safeguard against the disintegration of parties, which thus found within her scope and liberty of action. The promoters of this College in their resistance to attempted coercion were contending for this freedom of voluntary action within legal limits which both laity and clergy have ever deemed an inalienable right and necessity. Moreover, that which they sought to do was no innovation. Individually they had the right, as was admitted at the time, to prepare men for the Bishop's examinations, and it was urged that this should content them. But what had been done before in a desultory and unsatisfactory way, they proposed now to do by methods more thorough and systematic; and surely, as they contended, their liberty extended to the better doing of that which they were already doing less completely and satisfactorily.

The Church in Canada had no corporate connection with the work of theological education, and no control over theological colleges. Even the Provincial Synod had not dealt with the matter. So late as in 1883, a committee of that Synod declined to recommend any action, a decision which, I rejoice to say, has been reconsidered so far as relates to theological examinations and degrees. Thus the matter stood; law could not be violated where no law existed; and no accusation could be more devoid of foundation than the statement repeatedly made that the founders of this College were acting in opposition to the settled laws of the Church.

Painful as it is to recur to these misrepresentations, they could not be passed over in silence in any just and accurate review of our history ; and although in every stage of the work the same misrepresentations have pursued the workers, I shall refrain, as far as possible, from any further allusion to them. Only we who know the motives of our founders and benefactors, their real and strong affection for the Church of their fathers, their devotion to its principles ; we who are impelled by the same strong convictions of truth and duty, and who see with sorrow the perils and conflicts which have gathered around our historic communion ; we who know and share these things, and who are jealous for the good name of this College, must indignantly repel the charges of disloyalty and faction which have been flung forth so gratuitously and vindicate the integrity and legality of our position.

In October, 1877, this work was begun in a very unassuming form in one of the Bible Class rooms of the school-house belonging to St. James' Cathedral, under whose fostering wings the infant institution was sheltered, and to the co-operation of whose members, under the late lamented Dean Grasett, the work owes an incalculable debt. In what was then known as the Protestant Episcopal Divinity School a little band of students assembled, and some six of the Evangelical clergy of the city gave their valuable and gratuitous services as instructors. And although the growth of the College and the increase of the staff have enabled us to diminish our demands upon their time and strength, their zeal has not grown cold, nor their co-operation less valuable, in the work. At our dedication service last evening three of these standard-bearers who led the

work at that time conducted our devotions and voiced our thankfulness for the progress achieved—the Venerable Archdeacon Boddy, M.A., the Rev. Alexander Sanson, and the Rev. Septimus Jones, M.A.

In 1878 the bitterness of the conflict was somewhat mitigated by the agreement arrived at between the representatives of the two parties in the diocese, upon the basis of which the Church Association was dissolved and the present Bishop of the diocese elected by a unanimous vote.

This partial recognition of the place and rights of the Divinity School was followed by two important steps towards placing it upon a more permanent and efficient basis. One was its incorporation in 1879; the other was the erection of the building upon College street in 1882, which gave the work a local habitation and supplied the accommodation and appliances without which it could not be efficiently conducted. The institution was still in the weakness of infancy, and at times the most resolute were tempted to despond, so great were the perils which threatened it. But the work of building was taken in hand and the contracts signed by the then Chairman and Treasurer, the Hon. S. H. Blake and Mr. W. H. Howland, who became personally responsible for the funds required, and to whose courageous faith we owe, in a large measure, the determination to build and its successful completion.

The original building soon proved inadequate, and in 1885 an addition was completed which almost doubled its capacity, giving additional dormitories, a refectory, and a splendid room for the library. The chief financial basis of the extension was furnished by the Hon. Edward Blake's munificent gift of \$10,000 for this purpose, but one of his many

generous benefactions to the College. Notwithstanding these additions the building proved inadequate for the growing work, and while the College Council was contemplating further extensions an opportunity was given to sell the building for hospital purposes. The proposition, at first refused, was ultimately accepted, the Council being reluctant to part with so central and convenient a site. The wisdom of the course taken is sufficiently justified by the erection of these buildings in a position altogether suitable for the work. The foundation was laid in the spring of 1890, and now, in the autumn of 1891, we are enabled by the Divine goodness to take possession of these new quarters, substantial and commodious, which owe very much more than I can tell you to the unwearied supervision of Sir Casimir Gzowski, whose unflagging interest in the work is everywhere manifest. But it will be a grievous mistake to regard this work as complete. Further enlargement will soon be necessary. I hope before very long to see an extension to the south, with a front towards University College, providing additional dormitories, and a convocation hall which shall supply more adequately the accommodation for public gatherings now temporarily secured in the suite of lecture rooms in which we are assembled.

Commensurate with the growth of the building, there has been an increase in the financial basis of support. The steady inflow of voluntary contributions is an indication of the deep interest felt in the work and a measure of the donors' attachment to the principles of the College. To name these many generous and self-denying friends is impossible. The record of their benefactions is attached to the annual calendar. At first there was no method with

regard to the collection of these gifts ; but the increase in the requirements of the work necessitated a more systematic procedure. Our friends are greatly indebted in this matter to the indefatigable energy and devotion of the Financial Secretary, the Rev. T. R. O'Meara. A partial endowment from gifts and legacies has been secured. Of this the foundation was laid by the liberality of Messrs. A. H. Campbell, Homer Dixon, J. K. Kerr, Sir C. S. Gzowski, the Blakes, and the late Sheriff Jarvis. Its increase, as rapidly as possible, ought to be strenuously sought after by our friends. For although it is well that such an institution as this should always be partially dependent upon voluntary offerings, and by this means kept in touch with its constituency ; yet because of its comparative remoteness from its supporters, not being in daily and weekly contact with them as a congregation is with its pastor and organization, it is necessary that there should be a backbone of endowment, a reserve of financial support, to meet the inevitable vicissitudes and delays of voluntary annual subscriptions.

Let me pass now from the material growth to the more internal and vital progress. The *personnel* of the staff is of vital importance to the efficiency of the work. We began with one paid professor, relying very largely upon the generous assistance of city clergymen already overburdened with the work of populous parishes. We have gradually enlarged our regular staff until we have four professors devoted to the work. In this enlargement we have followed a policy which, I believe, has amply justified itself. We found some years ago in making inquiries in England and taking counsel with such competent ad-

visers as Principal Moule, of Ridley Hall, in the University of Cambridge, that we must either afford very large inducements to tried and experienced men who were already in positions of responsibility, or take young and untried men. The former course was beyond our resources. If we must adopt the latter, it were better far than bringing from abroad men unknown to us and unproved in their own land, to take men whom we knew, men young but of promise, honour-graduates of the Toronto University, as well as of our own College, who were imbued with the spirit of our work and filled with enthusiasm for its advancement. This policy has been followed in Ridley Hall itself and elsewhere. The results here have more than justified its wisdom. I would speak very warmly and with heartiest approval of the work done by my younger colleagues. We have an increasing body of graduates from which we can draw for the development of our work. I trust that our friends will soon give us funds to add another instructor to our staff, and help us thus to reasonably realize the ideal toward which we have been working.

The library is an indispensable factor in the work of the College. The basis of our own was laid in the munificent gift of the family of the late Dean Grasett and in other contributions of generous friends, especially Mr. Wyld, and now reaches nearly eight thousand volumes. But we greatly need a library endowment fund and some provision for an annual increase to our books, not only from current literature, but also from the great works of the past, in not a few departments of theological study. This matter cannot be kept too prominently before the friends of the College. Our students are, however, by no means restricted

to our own College library. They have access to the great library of the University, now being reconstructed upon a most ample and acceptable basis, and numbering not less than forty thousand volumes, and to the valuable and extensive public library of this city, and to others of lesser extent. These are invaluable privileges.

Wycliffe College stands in two intimate and important educational relationships which merit consideration; the one literary – to the University of Toronto; and the other theological—to our Church in Canada.

Our connection with the University of Toronto was at first merely the local one of convenient proximity and access to its lecture-rooms and appliances. Even this was a very great advantage, in which we owed very much to the sympathy and co-operation of the revered President, Sir Daniel Wilson. In 1885 Wycliffe College was by statute of the University Senate, confirmed by the Governor in Council, affiliated to the University. In 1889 the College was by Act of the Ontario Legislature confederated and made a constituent part of the University of Toronto. From this close and intimate relationship with our national University the College derives great advantages. All our revenues are devoted to theological teaching, while the general literary training is provided by the University. Our students are able to avail themselves of all the resources of the University in the various departments of study, especially those which bear the closest relation to theology. Moreover, by our connection with the University we are preserved from that tendency to narrowness of which an isolated theological school stands in great danger. Our students commingle with those among whom their life-work

is to be carried on. They come into contact with men of different communions and destined for various professions, have their sympathies broadened, and learn to take broader and juster views of life. I lay great stress upon the influence of a common university life and the relations of our students with their fellow-students with whom they are associated in the pursuits of learning, and in the religious work which, I rejoice to say, is carried on both by the University Young Men's Christian Association and in other ways.

After much delay the Provincial Synod, in 1889, passed a canon relating to examinations and degrees in theology. The scheme was adopted in consultation with the theological colleges, and is chiefly based, with some modifications, not always improvements, upon the lines developed by Lightfoot and Westcott in connection with the University of Cambridge, and with what is known in England as the Preliminary Examination for Holy Orders. By this canon Wycliffe College is recognized as one of the six institutions devoted to theological teaching in this Ecclesiastical Province, and the Board of Examiners is constituted, upon which Wycliffe is represented equally with the other institutions. This scheme, which first comes into operation this year, has the hearty support of the Council of Wycliffe College, and we welcome it with great satisfaction, believing that it will exercise a very marked and beneficial influence upon theological education in Canada, elevating its standards and improving its methods. While, then, our College preserves completely its autonomy and carries on its work upon its own lines, it is intimately and organically connected, on the one hand, with our national system of educa-

tion, which has its crown and completion in the University of Toronto, and, on the other hand, with the special theological education of our own Church. The student of Wycliffe can, at the close of his course, go forth with his degree in Arts, the certificate and guarantee of his literary attainments, bearing the imprimatur of the University of Toronto, and with the certificate of the Board of Examiners of the Provincial Synod, bearing the imprimatur of the highest ecclesiastical authority in our Canadian Church.

No sketch of Wycliffe would be complete without some reference to the missionary work supported by our graduates, and the outcome of the practical work of the students which has been encouraged and developed in connection with their theological training, and which is as valuable and indispensable as the clinical side of medical studies. Already there are supported by the Missionary Society of the College and its friends a travelling missionary in Algoma, a missionary in Rupert's Land, and two missionaries in Japan, where we hope to see developed a strong and aggressive centre of educational and evangelistic work, and which specially commends itself to the prayerful and practical sympathy of the friends of Wycliffe.

Another educational enterprise at home has had its origin and impulse in Wycliffe College. There was long felt the necessity for a boys' school which should be of the highest standing in educational efficiency and pervaded by an earnest religious spirit to which those who value the Protestant and Evangelical principles of our Church could send their sons with confidence. Bishop Ridley College, St. Catharines, has now entered upon the second year of its existence under the energetic and admirable management of the Rev. J. O.

Miller, M.A., assisted by an able staff, and in its signal success has already more than justified the expectations of its promoters.

These enterprises, missionary and educational, and, above all, the faithful work of our alumni in their parishes and missions, are the practical outcome of the principles embodied in this College, which exists to provide such workers and to promote such work. For this object the College exists—to send forth faithful, earnest, devoted ministers of the Gospel of Christ, not mere theological theorists, but practical men, faithful to the Reformation principles and devoting themselves without reserve to the service of humanity in the most blessed of all ministries, the bond-service of Jesus Christ. To say that there may have been, and to expect that there will be, no failures, no disappointments, would be to claim what is unknown in any enterprise committed to frail men; but we can say, humbly and thankfully, that the labours of our alumni and the whole work of the College have been blessed beyond the most sanguine expectations of its friends, and that the promise of the future is rich and encouraging, so that we are ready to go forward with unabated confidence, assured that the same strong and loving Presence to which we owe all the success of the past will abide with us in the days to come, and prove, as of old, the exhaustless source of wisdom and strength, filling our work with abounding vigour and keeping it true to its original design and to the principles which it embodies.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

The whole value of our work depends upon those principles which it represents and propagates. Nothing

less than the most vital issues can either vindicate its past course or guarantee the stability and success of its future development. Profound and far-reaching, we believe these issues to be. In any enquiry into their nature we must bear in mind that we are not dealing with isolated statements, fragments without connection or relationship, among which we can pick and choose, each selecting for himself what he will retain or reject. On the contrary, we have to do with one homogeneous whole, a correlated system, a living organism, all of whose parts stand in a definite and vital relationship to each other. Moreover, we find this organism of truth dominated and controlled by a few great principles. If these principles are clearly understood and resolutely held, the whole compass of the truth revealed in Christ stands forth luminous and self-consistent. But if they are ignored, displaced, or perverted, our whole religious belief is vitiated, and our conceptions of God, of liberty, and of righteousness suffer. Still further it will be seen that these principles converge into one focus, that they centre themselves in the one point, of all others the most practically important and momentous—How shall sinful man be just with God?—in the question of the anxious heart, tersely and urgently voiced by the Philippian jailor, “What must I do to be saved?” It is in the answers given to this question that the fundamental and vital differences between the sacerdotal and the Evangelical theologies most vividly present themselves. Nowhere does this stand out more manifestly than in the development of the great Reformation and in the life histories of the Reformers, *e.g.*, of Luther. Take him at the outset of his career, a pious and ardent monk, whose

whole concern, as Dorner observes, was about the salvation of his soul. Profoundly conscious of the Divine holiness, and of his own sinfulness, in vain he sought for peace and deliverance by following the prescriptions and observances of the sacerdotal Church, as he himself afterwards confessed, with fastings, vigils, prayers, and other exercises, torturing and wearying his body far more than his most bitter enemies and persecutors ever did. But it was all in vain until he learnt the great truth that man is justified by faith without works of law, and apprehended the glorious significance of the words of the Apostolic Creed—"I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Thus Luther first came into the possession of the personal experience of salvation by faith. It was only by degrees that he came to know the full significance of this truth and its bearing upon theology as well as upon life. He had, as Dorner says, as yet no presentiment of the fact that there lay in it the germ of a totally different system of the economy of salvation from the ecclesiastical. There is not time to trace the steps by which he was led towards a consummation he had never dreamt of. He was himself astonished at the light which the knowledge acquired upon one point shed upon the whole compass of theology, and unveiled to him the manifold errors of the dominant system. He found the truth of the appropriation by faith of the free grace of God in Christ to be a principle of universal significance. By it he was ushered into a new world of Evangelical freedom. It became the constructive principle of his theology, and, as expressed in the doctrine of justification by faith only, apart from works, it soon became manifest that it was entitled to the place universally conceded to it as the

great subjective principle of the Reformation. He himself called it *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*, the article of a standing or falling Church. His Roman antagonists themselves viewed it as the keystone of the Protestant position, and hence the principal theologians of the Council of Trent, as Sarpi in his history of that Council relates, advised that their fathers and divines should be assiduous and exact in their studies concerning the doctrine of justification "because all the errors of Martin (Luther) were resolved into that point." They conceded the doctrine of justification by faith only, to be the master principle of the Reformation. "Therefore," they alleged, "by a contrary way, he that will establish the body of the Catholic doctrine must overthrow the heresy of justification by faith only."

The student of St. Paul's life cannot fail to observe how close is the parallel between his experience and that of Luther. Study in the light of the apostolic history the third chapter of Philippians, and the contrast there drawn between the Pharisaic legalist who sought by his devotion to ritual and his obedience to law to build up for himself a sure ground of acceptance with God, and the humble disciple and bond-slave of Jesus of Nazareth, who accounts all his attainments, privileges, and performances as dross, vile, and worthless, and finds his only hope of acceptance, his only ground of confidence before God, his only righteousness, in the merits of the Redeemer appropriated by faith. Study St. Paul's conflict with the Judaizers, whose error is identical in substance with that of legalists and sacerdotalists in all ages; read in the Epistle to the Galatians his impassioned denunciation of their perversion of the Gos-

pel of Christ and his vindication of the liberty of the Gospel and of the gratuitousness of salvation, and you will not be surprised that Luther chose this epistle as his most efficient engine in overthrowing the vast superstructure of error which had been raised upon the simple foundations of the Gospel, and that his "Commentary on the Galatians" remains, as Bishop Lightfoot affirms, a speaking monument of the mind of the Reformers and of the principles of the Reformation. All departures from the Reformation position can be traced back to unfaithfulness to this great master principle, justification by faith only. Our great Hooker, in his notable sermon on justification, finds here the essential point in the differences between England and Rome, and affirms the Roman doctrine of justification to be the mystery of the man of sin. In this he is at one with our Reformers and great divines. Archbishop Usher overflows with it. Bishops Downname and Davenant have devoted volumes to this controversy. The keynote of our Church's teaching is sounded in Article XI., that "we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith and not for our own works or deservings." "Then," to quote the words of the judicious Hooker, "although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteousness, yet even the man who is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin, him, being found in Christ through faith and having his sin remitted through repentance, him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it, taketh quite away the punishment due thereto by pardoning it, and accepteth him in Jesus Christ as perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law."

In the history of our Church there occur two periods of lamentable defection from Reformation doctrine, and between them a remarkable parallelism can be traced. I refer to the Laudian and the Tractarian movements. The errors and evils in each can be traced up to one central and fountain error. The decline in each began with the obscuring and setting aside of the truth of justification by faith only, and substituting therefor the old legal and sacerdotal figment of a progressive justification by works, ceremonies, and sacraments. The work of Bishop Bull on the agreement of St. Paul with St. James on justification is an outcome of the earlier of these defections. The character of its theology, confused, illogical, and unscriptural, can be judged from its definition of faith, which Bull states, "comprehends in one word all the works of Christian piety." The influence of this pernicious work upon the theology of non-jurors and High Churchmen has been very great; and to this day it is recommended as an authority by bishops and examining chaplains of that school. It is one of the books which have transmitted the errors of the Laudian divines to the later Tractarian school, and prepared the way for the more pronounced developments of Oxford theology. Dr. Pusey condemns those who "sever justification from baptism and make it consist in the act of reliance on the merits of Christ alone." He asserts that "we are by baptism brought into the state of salvation or justification"; and he further tells us that it is "a state admitting of degrees according to the degree of sanctification." In Newman's lectures on justification, written before his departure to Rome and approved by Dr. Pusey, it is stated that "the righteousness wherein we must stand at the last day is not Christ's own imputed

obedience, but our own good works." He tells us that "cleanness of heart and spirit, obedience by word and deed, these alone can constitute our justification." "The gift of righteousness or justification is not an imputation, but an inward work." "If He (God) accounts righteous, it is by making righteous." But, as Godet points out, this is the vital difference between Romanism and Protestantism: the former teaches an inward regeneration by means of the sacraments, on the ground of which God pardons; the latter teaches a free reconciliation through faith in Christ's merits, on the ground of which God regenerates. Faber, in his primitive "Doctrine of Justification," draws the contrast between the certainty and sufficiency of the Gospel plan of salvation and the painful uncertainties of sacerdotalism. If we follow the teaching of the Reformers, "we shall build our justification, not upon the ever-shifting sands of man's imperfect and inherent righteousness, but upon the immovable rock and absolute cubical unity of the perfect and finished righteousness of Christ."

The latest Tractarian doctrine differs from the earlier in that it has been formulated more completely into a system which is in its essence a Pantheistic Hegelianism. It is curious and instructive to follow out this teaching to its source. The Tractarian doctrine was first elaborated by Archdeacon Wilberforce, afterwards a pervert to Rome, in his work on the Incarnation. It may be thus briefly stated. The Incarnation is the central dogma of Christianity. Christ having completed His manifestation of Himself upon the earth is now enthroned in heaven as the Head of His mystical body, the Church, which, as Gore says, is of a piece with the Incarnation, whose benefits it perpetuates by means

of a once for all empowered and commissioned ministry through the sacraments which are the instruments by which we are incorporated into Christ and the channels of spiritual gifts, the sacraments themselves being dependent upon the ministry, apart from whose succession and authority they have no validity. Now, as I said, it is curious to trace the genesis of this theory of the sacraments as the extension of the Incarnation. Wilberforce first introduced it into Tractarianism. He derived it from the German Roman Catholic theologian, Moehler, of a portion of whose "Symbolik" his book is substantially an expansion. Moehler's object was to express Roman theology in the terms of contemporary philosophical thought, and thus, if possible, to place its dogmas upon a philosophical basis. He took hold of the Pantheistic conception of God perpetually becoming man, an eternal incarnation of God in humanity, as Schelling formulated it. Hegel had constructed upon this basis a philosophy of history. A little later Strauss utilized it in his myth theory of the origin of the Gospel history. Moehler transferred the idea from humanity in general to the Roman Church, so that instead of its being the incarnation of God in humanity, it became, in his theory, the incarnation of God in the Church; the Church being the form or incarnation in which God existed for the world, and through which the world could find access to God, so that to be united to the Church is to be united to God in Christ. Wilberforce simply adapted Moehler's theory to Tractarian exigencies, and to the Tractarian conception of the Church, which included the Anglican and Greek as well as the Roman. The practical result of such a theology is to give the Church that position of mediatorship which belongs to Christ alone; and accordingly the means

by which man is reconciled to God is the reception of the sacraments and submission to the priesthood. A man-devised method of reconciliation is substituted for that proclaimed in the Gospel. It is clear then that the only effective remedy for such a perversion is the proclamation of the Gospel itself. This was the instrument so effective in the hands of its first preachers, and which proved, as St. Paul declared, the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. It was by the same instrumentality that the Reformation was achieved, and by no other means can our Church be delivered from the false gospel of sacerdotalism. It is to bear witness to this great truth of justification by faith only that this College exists, that it may impress it upon its students and send them forth to teach and enforce it and make it the living centre of their preaching.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

To justification by faith there is a correlative truth—the absolute supremacy of the Word of God as the only rule of Christian faith and life. The one is the inner and subjective, the other the external objective principle of Evangelical Protestantism; and the two are closely related, for the Word of God is the warrant of faith. It is from the promise and revelation of God in Christ that faith derives the guarantees upon which it rests. The written record of the Scriptures sets forth the person of Christ in whom faith trusts, the work of Christ upon which faith builds. The career of Luther forcibly illustrates the relationship between the two truths. When he could not find pardon and peace by means of the prescriptions of the Church, he obtained it by faith in the promises of the Gospel. Then he found the

authority of the Church arrayed against him. Against it he had but one appeal, and it is upon the Word of God that he takes his stand. "That," he exclaims, "is God's Word; on that will I risk body and life, and a hundred thousand necks, if I had them."

The doctrine of tradition was the substitution of man's word for God's. At quite an early period in Church history the question came to be, not what does God's Word teach, but what do fathers teach and councils affirm that God's Word declares. The Church was thus made the mediator of truth as well as of grace. As man cannot receive what God gives, so neither can he know what God reveals except through the Church, that is, the priesthood. The patristic rule of *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est*, proved as embarrassing as it was false. Even its originator, Vincentius Lirinensis, was obliged to limit it to "the consent of all or nearly all the clergy." And ever since the Reformation the Church of Rome has been more and more pressed by the insufficiency and inconvenience of the requirement of universal consent as the test of truth, as the progress of historical knowledge and the methods of historical enquiry began to show the novelty of her distinctive dogmas. Moehler again came to the rescue with his philosophizing. As he made the Church the substitute for Christ by his adaptation of the Hegelian hypothesis of an eternal Incarnation, so he also made the Church the substitute for the Holy Scriptures by the skilful application to theology of the philosophical doctrine of development. Inspiration was thus taught to be continuous in the Church, to which new revelations were constantly being made. Tradition was as little necessary as Scripture to the authentication of a

dogma. The voice of the living Church becomes a sufficient substitute for both. And as there were false as well as true developments, a criterion was necessary to distinguish them. This was provided in the infallible authority of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, whose decisions were final, so that Pius the Ninth could say, "I am the tradition." The development theory of Moehler was adopted by Newman, and is the accepted hypothesis of the younger Tractarians of the Lux Mundi school, and requires only the doctrine of the Papal Infallibility as its correlative. It is the last desperate attempt of our Anglican traditionalists to defend their dogmas against the encroachments of modern critical enquiry. The disintegration may be delayed, but it cannot be arrested; and when it does come, the collapse will be all the more complete.

Now, it is characteristic of all these theories that they make the Scriptures the initial point in a course of development. They make the development begin with the completed Scriptures and go on through the whole course of Church life, bringing in thoughts and dogmas which are confessedly not in the Scriptures at all. The Scriptures are thus virtually superseded. They no longer possess either finality or completeness. They no longer remain the one supreme authority which determines what we ought to believe and do according to the mind of Christ.

We, on the contrary, hold fast to the supremacy of the Scriptures. It is because they contain God's revelation of Himself in His Son that they are final and complete, until that Son comes again. Before His advent, God spoke in the prophets, giving a fragmentary, preparatory, and incomplete revelation. At last He spoke in His Son, who is the

express image of His substance. That revelation cannot be superseded or supplemented. We accept it as final and complete for the present dispensation. But this finality does not exclude progress in theology. There is and must be a continuous advance in a living Church, but it is not an advance away from and beyond the Scriptures; it is an advance which, beginning in each successive generation with the measure of its understanding of the Divine Word, goes on to a fuller and riper knowledge of that Word. The starting point is the measure possessed of the knowledge of the truth; the goal is the complete knowledge of the truth revealed. The historical development is not the receiving of new revelations which virtually set aside the Scriptures, but it is a growing up into the full understanding and the complete assimilation of the revelation given once for all in the Incarnate Son of God.

But it may be said, Is not this great Protestant principle of the supremacy of the Scriptures superseded and discredited, not merely by sacerdotal assumptions, but also by modern scholarship and research? We hear in some quarters a good deal about the errors of Scripture, the mistakes of Moses, the contradictions of theology and science. What weight are we to attach to these? I cannot now enter at length into the questions here raised, but I will set before you a few considerations which may be of service to the timid.

First, inspiration is one thing, a theory of inspiration is another. We may not be agreed as to the precise terms of the theory. We cannot but accept the glorious reality that God has revealed Himself to us. If He could not, where is His power? If He would not, where is His love? And to

do it, and yet to do it so feebly, so uncertainly, so vaguely, that we cannot know whether or not He speaks or what He utters, were not worthy of a weak and fallible man, much less of an eternal and omnipotent God. With the fact of the Christian revelation, Theism must stand or fall.

Secondly, truth is self-attesting. This is characteristic of all truth, whether mathematical, physical, or ethical. Every humble seeker verifies for himself the Divine promise which is, in its inmost nature, the assertion of a Divine law—"Ye shall know the truth." Truth does not need any external authority, whether of Council, Pope, or Father, to rest upon. It verifies itself. It is by the manifestation of the truth, to use St. Paul's expression, that the true teacher commends himself to every man's conscience. Let us have confidence in the truth. It is often the excess of scepticism which leads to superstition. It was Newman's distrust of God's revelation of Himself in reason and in Scripture which drove him to the alternative of absolute unbelief or of submission to external authority. He chose the latter alternative, and his own premises logically led him into submission to Rome.

Thirdly, it is a mistake to speak of contradictions between nature and revelation. What we do find are apparent contradictions between science, which is man's interpretation of nature, and theology, which is man's interpretation of revelation. In either of these interpretations man may err, and has repeatedly erred. When confronted by these perplexities, let us have patience and courage. The timidity of some Christians is as reprehensible and more hurtful than the arrogance of many unbelievers. What a curious commentary on human fallibility is the conflict between Genesis

and geology. We smile alike at the rash zeal of some apologists who found in the presence of shells on the heights of the Alps a proof of a universal deluge, and the superficial cleverness of Voltaire, who evaded the force of the supposed demonstration by the suggestion that the shells had been dropped by pilgrims from the Holy Land. We may not yet be fully able to synchronize every stage in the record with every successive step in the evolution of the world; but we refuse to accept the now almost incredible suggestion once seriously made that God created the fossils and placed them in the rocks as a test of our faith. And who does not marvel as he contrasts the puerilities and absurdities of other ancient cosmogonies with the grandeur and verisimilitude of that of Moses? Who can fail to trace the marvellous correspondence between its testimony and that of the rocks to the order and beauty of the Divine method which unfolded itself in those *dies ineffabiles*, those God-divided, not sun-divided, days, as the great Augustine called them centuries before geology had begun to trace the vast periods of the world's formation. Profound problems in biology are now to be dealt with. And if, while we are still but children in knowledge, we protest against the haughty dogmatism of some scientists as to revelation, let us theologians beware lest we repeat their error by an equally crude and self-sufficient condemnation of the working hypotheses of science.

Fourthly, let us remember that the science of the Biblical criticism of the Old Testament is still in its infancy, and there is too strong a disposition to accept as true what are still, to say the least, unproved hypotheses. But these speculations are not to be met by dogmatic denunciation, but by the more thorough study of the documents and their history.

It is not very long since the Biblical criticism of the New Testament was in an equally tentative position. And what have been the results? When our Authorized Version was made, the Greek text was substantially that of Erasmus, founded upon a few late and inferior Greek manuscripts, and in the case of the Book of Revelation upon one defective manuscript of the 15th century, so that he had to retranslate a portion of it (some six verses) from the Vulgate into Greek. Now a science of textual criticism, as exact and thorough as research and scholarship can make it, has discussed and arranged some 1,500 manuscripts, some of them dating from the fourth and fifth centuries; has compared and collated some 150,000 various readings, and has given us a text which with but comparatively few exceptions we can confidently affirm to be the *ipsissima verba* of the writers. Yet the result has not been a revolution but a confirmation of the substantial accuracy of Erasmus and his co-workers.

So the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings were challenged. They were subjected to the severest and often the most unfair tests; yet, even those who have taken the position of hostile critics concede the authenticity of four, with few exceptions of eight, of the most important New Testament writings, sufficient to establish every great truth of Christianity. I speak now of the minimum of admission of the most pronounced enemies of Evangelical religion. And while there are still problems awaiting solution, the result of this conflict has been to place the historical basis of our faith and its documents upon a stronger foundation than ever, and to confirm the judgment of the Christian Church throughout the ages.

Such, too, will be the result of the present controversies relating to the Old Testament. Some changes may be required in our belief as to the authorship and age of some Old Testament books; some traditional views may have to be replaced by a more accurate and critical estimate of the process by which the Canon of the Old Testament was formed and preserved; some of our conceptions of God's working in the older dispensation may be modified; but the outcome will be the triumphant vindication of the inerrancy of Him who said "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled," and who could affirm of Himself as a co-ordinate authority as well as a competent witness, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Recent researches into the history and antiquities of the east have vivified our knowledge of the Old Testament, and furnished innumerable corroborations of its truthfulness, so that not too confident is the expectation of Professor Sayce, of Oxford, that the Biblical history will yet be disinterred by pick and spade from the soil of Palestine.

Moreover, the difficulties of the Bible are the difficulties of life; they are those which inhere in the present constitution of things; and their presence in the Bible is the best demonstration that it is a living book and proceeds from the God of all life and wisdom. Were it otherwise, were the Bible so superficial as to present no problems and create no difficulties, we must either cease to regard it as Divine, or accept the boast of the proud Gnostic, that he knew God as thoroughly as the staff in his hand. But let such impious thoughts begone in the presence of Him whose judgments are unsearchable and His ways past

finding out. Surely such a God must transcend our puny reason; but He cannot contradict it. He would not have us despise His own gift. Let us beware lest we incur the censure not unjustly cast upon some Evangelicals, that their hatred of rationalism turned into fear of reason. Intellectual timidity is nearly as hurtful, if less criminal, than moral cowardice. Let us seek for large views of God and of His universe.

As Bishop Lightfoot has grandly stated it—"the abnegation of reason is not the evidence of faith, but the confession of despair." Let us be in sympathy with science, with research, with the restless daring spirit of the age which must question, examine, test all things; a spirit indeed capable of awful perversions, if it be the fruit of self-assertion, akin to the old Babel ambition to build a tower to heaven; but which may be and is, in its best and true form, a determination to know truth and to stamp out falsehood, a passion for the real, a God-given impulse to subdue this great world of matter and of thought and to rule over it and to make it subservient to those supreme moral and spiritual ends for which God created it.

So far, then, from having any reason to distrust or to discard that great principle of our Protestantism which leads us to acknowledge no Lord over the conscience, no king of truth, but God Himself, the God who has given us a revelation of Himself, not only in nature and reason, but, above all, in His Son; we have every reason to hold fast to it as the great anchor of our hope, the impregnable foundation of our faith. The Bible is to-day more fresh, more real, more accessible, than it ever was. It speaks now with as paramount authority as of old. It attests itself as decisively by its power to

search the heart, to convict the conscience, to transform the life, and to bring man into that fellowship with God which is at once the necessity and the perfection of his nature.

From these two primary principles of Evangelical Protestantism, logically follow the Evangelical doctrines of the Church, the ministry, and the sacraments. Upon them depends the whole organism of Evangelical truth, which, as a correlative system, must, in all its essential members, stand or fall together. No *via media* is possible, except in the delusions of illogical minds, or in the compromises of false expediency. The choice must ultimately lie between a thoroughgoing Sacerdotalism and a consistent and decided Evangelicalism. Between these two the conflict is irrepressible. Indolence or cowardice may lead us to attempt to evade the issues; but it will prove impossible. Each one of us is called to contend for the truth. Let us see to it that while we speak the truth, we speak it in love. The stronger our confidence in the truth, the greater should be our patience and tenderness towards those who oppose it. We are not contending with men, but with false principles; and what we desire, as a great English statesman has recently said, is the good of our opponents; their conversion, not their confusion.

Lastly, let us remember that our theology is Christocentric. The dogmas are but definitions of certain relations in which we stand towards Christ, a relation of obedience to His Word and of confidence in His promise. Not the holding of dogmas saves, but the holding of the Head Himself. It is possible, let us remember, for those who have but a feeble intellectual grasp of the doctrine to hold fast to the living Christ, to follow Him truly, and possess His Spirit.

And it is possible, on the other hand, to have accurate conceptions of doctrine and yet to lack that personal trust in Christ and that loyal subjection to Him which are essentials in a truly Evangelical life. The whole man must be in subjection to Christ. We must have His love in our hearts and His law in our conscience, not less than His truth in our understanding. A dead Evangelicalism is of all things the most repulsive. A living Evangelicalism means a life of service to men, inspired by supreme love to the Son of Man. We can be safe and strong, morally and spiritually, only in so far as we are in touch with the living Christ, united to Him by a living and fruitful faith.



