

The Questions of the Ordinal - Part 2

by W.H. Griffith Thomas

The sermon explores the essential qualities and responsibilities of ministers, emphasizing the importance of personal integrity and reliance on God in their service.

Scripture: 1 John 4:21

Topics: "Church Unity", "Christian Love"

Description

W.H. Griffith Thomas preaches about the importance of maintaining peace, unity, and love among Christian people, emphasizing the need to avoid discord and promote harmony within the Church. He highlights the significance of upholding truth, love, and wisdom in all interactions, both within the congregation and with those outside the Church. The sermon focuses on the dual role of a minister in waging war against erroneous doctrines while also being a peacemaker, fostering understanding and goodwill among diverse groups. The ultimate goal is to create a community marked by quietness, peace, and love, reflecting the spirit of Christ.

Transcript

V. Satisfying Service.

Mark the inquiry. "Will you do this gladly and willingly?" And the answer. "I will so do, by the help of God."

1. The Ministry will be a glad service. This is a simple but searching test of the quality of our ministry. Are we enjoying it? Are we glad in it? We may be tired in it, but we ought not to be tired of it. There is no service on earth in which there is so much deep gladness.

2. The ministry will be a willing service. Not forced labour, but spontaneous service out of a ready mind and willing heart. The moment the foot begins to drag and the service becomes a burden, it is a call to inquire as to our spiritual, or our mental, or, most likely of all, our bodily health.

3. And the ministry will be a trustful service. "By the help of God." Herein lies the supreme secret: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And hence, too, is the fearless response: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." In the face of all the problems, the demands, the temptations, the disappointments, the weariness, the failures, the word rings out beyond all question, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And the heart responds as it rests on the Word of our Heavenly Father: "With God all things are possible." "All things are possible to him that believeth."

Section 6. The Personal Life.

After the official duties comes the consideration of personal life. Character is the true source of service, and duties can only be efficiently performed by one whose life is true. "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Let us ponder carefully this question.

"Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own lives, and the lives of your families, according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?"

I. The Call. "Wholesome examples." This is the object set before the minister. 1. Consider the "wholesome examples" in relation to personal life. On the publication of the first volume of Dr. Temple's Rugby Sermons, someone said to him, "They will stir people strongly." "No," said Temple, "written sermons seldom do. It is the man behind the sermon that stirs." This is the case in every department of ministerial life and activity. It is "the man behind" that tells. What, then, is the life of the true minister of Christ? (a) It should be marked by Sincerity.

In everything said and done he should be straight and true. In the matter and manner of his sermons, in the substance and form of his teaching, in the conduct and guidance of parochial affairs, his life should be consistent. Not ability, but reality is what people earnestly desire and rightly demand. (b) It should be marked by Seriousness. As we have seen, one of the key words of the Pastoral Epistles is "grave" (σεμνός), and it is the more striking in that it is pressed upon young men.

But can we expect gravity from young men? Yes, if we remember that gravity is not gloom, and that brightness is not lightness. The minister is rightly expected to take a serious view of life and not to allow himself to degenerate into a reputation for lightness, still less for flippancy. 2. Consider the "wholesome examples" in relation to home life. While primarily the question refers to the influence of the man on those around him in the endeavour to make them examples, we may fairly widen the thought and dwell upon the man's own personal character in connection with his home life.

A bachelor Curate, living in lodgings, has a special opportunity for making or marring his reputation. In his use of time, in the regularity of his meal hours, and generally in his thought for his landlady, he can do much to glorify God and recommend his Master's service. It is not at all surprising to find the impressions of the Curate that leak out in the parish from what is known of his life in his lodgings. It is a true test of a man to find out how he lives in the privacy of his rooms and in the secrecy of his chamber.

How does he spend his time between breakfast and lunch? What about his afternoons? What are the books which are found about in his rooms? Does he pay his landlady regularly? Does his room reek with stale tobacco smoke? These may seem small in themselves, but "straws show which way the wind blows." And when he is a Vicar and has a house of his own; when, moreover, he is married and a family is growing up around him, the call to be "wholesome examples" is even more pressing. The Vicarage will often give the tone to the parish.

The affairs of the Vicarage will be known in the parish. People will become aware whether tradesmen's bills are paid, whether servants are fairly treated, whether the children are well disciplined, whether the Vicar's wife is concerned for the welfare of the parish, and above all, whether the man who preaches such eloquent and able sermons is able to "show piety at home." It is one of the saddest and most deplorable things when a clergyman's house gets a reputation for the very opposite of these things.

It is all the more terrible when the clergyman happens to preach the highest spiritual doctrine, and even dismisses his choir for being unspiritual and unconverted, and yet fails again and again to pay his debts to tradesmen in the parish. Who can wonder that spiritual religion is repellent in that parish by reason of the "unwholesome example" of that clergyman? And this is no fancy picture. Men soon take the measure of their clergy. Truth will out, and the average judgment of a congregation respecting the clergyman can usually be trusted with unerring certainty.

A layman once judged a clergyman by a single test only - whether he would be the sort of man to send for when one is on a deathbed. A very fair, a very true, and a very searching test. "Wholesome examples of the flock of Christ." This, and this above all, is the secret of ministerial blessing and power over men.

II. The Effort.

How is the call to be met, and the ideal realized? Only by dint of definite effort. The question suggests this.

1. There must be genuine effort. "Frame and fashion." This means work, and work which will not be done at once.
2. There must be constant effort. "Will you apply all your diligence?" The clergyman will need all his powers to accomplish this end, and he must never be off duty. Bishop Wilberforce acutely says: - "Let there be no intervals of conscious self-allowance, no earthly parentheses in our ministerial life." [Addresses to Candidates for Ordination, p. 222.]

The saddest of sad experiences is the case of those clergymen who fall after years of untarnished reputation. For a long time they have laboured with outward and apparent acceptance, but all the while they have been indulging some secret sin, or doubtful habit which has at length made its appearance in the life. Like those at Sardis they have a name that they live and yet are dead (Rev. 3:1). They are like the fungus in the tree which makes no apparent difference until it falls off in the autumn and reveals the real change effected. A man is used of God in preaching and working, and then at the close of a long ministry he is found guilty of some sin which necessitates instant resignation, and a retirement into permanent obscurity until at length we read the bare announcement of his death, and we wonder what might have been if only he had been true to the end. This again is no mere imagination, for there are cases such as this known to many. I remember reading in the Church Times a brief but poignant article entitled "In Memory". It began: -

"A few days ago there passed to his account a priest who must be nameless, and he died in greatest destitution and want. He was a man who, with others, had defiled the Church he served by language and actions unspeakable. After his ejection from the living and degradation from his Office, he went lower and lower in the social scale until, just lately, he was found utterly destitute and incapable in a common lodging house, whence he was removed to the workhouse infirmary, and there he died. God grant to us that he has not lived and died in vain."

Truly, truly, we are not safe until the last. There is a way to Hell, says Bunyan, even from the gate of Heaven. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

III. The Standard.

It is time to ask how this "wholesome example" may be realized. And one answer is "according to the doctrine of Christ". We must live our life in constant view of Holy Scripture. The Word of God is to be the "discerner," the "critic," the criterion of our inner life (Heb. 4:12). We must submit ourselves to it as to a searchlight, as to a probing instrument, as to a plumb line. If our life does not ring true to Scripture, it means that there is a flaw in the metal. No lower test will suffice. Our own view may easily be partial. "I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified." And the view of others will not always and necessarily be correct and complete. "In Thy light shall we see light," and it may be said without hesitation and without qualification that the man who allows himself to be tested and searched and guided day by day by the unerring word of God will never backslide in any degree whatever. On the other hand, if our lives are not lived ever in the light of Holy Scripture, "according to the doctrine of Christ," and in face of the mirror of truth (James 1:23-25), it is impossible to say how far a man may not go from the path of rectitude and holiness.

IV. The Secret.

But this reference to Holy Scripture inevitably suggests something more. The question is answered by a resolution and an expression of trust. "I will so do, the Lord being my helper." And we must endeavour to discover the secret of its realization.

1. Scripture finds its fullest power over the life only when we are in fellowship with Christ. The Persian parable tells of the clay being asked how it was that it was the possessor of such fragrance, and replying, "I have been living near a rose." Henry Drummond tells of a young girl of exquisite beauty of character, and when after her death they opened a locket, expecting to find the portrait of some loved one, they saw nothing but the words, "Whom having not seen, ye love." This was the secret of her loveliness of spirit. It is there and thus that we shall assimilate such a spirit that we shall never fail to be "wholesome examples of the flock of Christ".

2. And this fellowship comes in a simple way. The trustful resolution, "I will so do, the Lord being my helper," becomes possible in the twofold method of prayer and meditation. In prayer we speak to God; in the Bible God speaks to us. And prayer is the response of the soul to the Bible as the Word of God. Private prayer, regular private prayer, definite regular private prayer, is the one prime secret of holy living. There is a profound truth in these words (are they Oliver Wendell Holmes' or Thackeray's?): "If you go into a minister's study and find that there is a bare place on the carpet in front of his chair, get him to pray for you; but if you find the bare place in front of his looking glass you pray for him."

The story is familiar, but well worth recalling, of Dean Hook of Chichester, that when a workman was going up a ladder early one morning at the Deanery, he saw through a window the Dean even then in his study and at prayer, and this made a deep and lasting impression on the man. Be it ours to "pray, always pray," and then will assuredly come holiness of heart, acuteness of mind, insight of soul, resoluteness of will, and winsomeness of life.

Note. - In the Ordering of Priests there is a special question dealing with the place of Prayer and Holy Scripture in the personal life of the clergyman, but as this subject is briefly considered above, and will be dealt with more fully in connection with the Exhortation in the Ordering of Priests, it has not seemed necessary to treat it separately here,

Section 7. Obedience to Lawful Authority.

The seventh question in the Ordering of Deacons and the last question in the Ordering of Priests are almost identical in terms, and refer to the minister's loyal acceptance of the Church of England as found and received. The inquiry is not so personal and spiritual as others, but it is none the less valuable and necessary. Independence of authority is a characteristic of today, and it is well that we should be reminded of the need of obedience. It is of course implied that our obedience is always subject to the Word and Law of God.

"Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers of the Church, and them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?"

"Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?"

I. Our Church Authorities.

1. First come the Creeds of the Church Universal. They represent the belief of the whole Church and come to us with all the weight that rightly attaches to so universal a testimony. In the sixteenth century the truths of these Creeds were put in the forefront of the Articles to show the continued adherence of the Church of England to these fundamental realities.

2. Then come the Articles of the Church as national. These represent the distinctive position of our Church on those points on which its mind is declared, and with special reference to the circumstances of the sixteenth century. As the Articles have still to be accepted by every Ordinand, and by every clergyman on entering a new benefice, their authority is unquestioned.

3. Then follow the Rubrics which represent the detailed instructions as to the conduct of Divine Worship by the clergy of the Church. These call for obedience to their plain grammatical meaning, with as close adherence as possible to their instructions.

There is practically no difficulty in regard to these three as the Sources of our Church Authority. The difficulties commence when we proceed to our next point.

II. The Interpretation of our Authorities. What is to be done, if for any reason we cannot agree as to the meaning of Creeds, or Articles, or Rubrics? 1. The first reference is to the "Ordinary," which is usually interpreted to mean the Bishop of the Diocese, or else the immediate superior officer for the time being. To him is to be referred any question touching the true interpretation of the Rubrics. 2. The next reference is to "other chief Ministers of the Church," by which is probably to be understood the Archbishop, according to the provision made in the prefatory address, "Concerning the Service of the Church".

"And forasmuch as nothing can be so plainly set forth, but doubts may arise in the use and practice of the same; to appease all such diversity (if any arise) and for the resolution of all doubts, concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute the things contained in this Book; the parties that so doubt, or diversely take anything, shall always resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same; so that the same order be not contrary to anything contained in this Book.

And if the Bishop of the Diocese be in doubt, then he may send for the resolution thereof to the Archbishop." 3. But as things stand at present in the Church of England, there is an appeal, if necessary, even from the Archbishop, because the highest legal authority does not reside in the Bishops. The Church being established, and Parliament still being supposed theoretically to represent the lay element, the Supreme Court of Appeal in all causes Ecclesiastical is the King in Council, the King being supreme in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil.

This appeal to the King is not Erastian, as though the State is to dominate the Church, for it is well known that the Supreme Governorship by the King was not made with reference to his position as Head of the State, but as to his character as Chief Layman of the Church. The supremacy of the King was intended to safeguard the Church against a clerical supremacy. Now this is the threefold provision in the English Church at present for the interpretation of authorities, and it is not too much to say that no man ought to be ordained unless he is prepared to obey the authority as thus constituted.

He may object to the jurisdiction, and may wish and endeavour to get it altered, but meanwhile he should obey it. It surely signifies the possession of a somewhat curious conscience for a man to be ordained who knows that these are the authorities and who yet is determined to disregard and disobey them. 4. But we are sometimes told that there is an appeal from the Church National to the Church Catholic. It would be extremely helpful to know precisely what this means and how it may be applied.

Article XXXIV is very plain as to the authority of National Churches: - "Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying." It is difficult to see what there can be of appeal beyond this. Besides, to what authority in the Church Catholic can we appeal? And on what subjects has the Church Catholic really made its voice heard and its mind known?

Is there anything truly Catholic apart from the great Creeds of Christendom? Article XXXIV says quite definitely that "It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word." This question of the relation of National Churches to the Church Universal needs the most careful and thorough definition by those who advocate it, for most men find no satisfaction in such an argument owing to the absence of any declaration beyond the Creeds as to what is truly Catholic or Universal.

The impossibility of the position was clearly seen at the recent Royal Commission when Lord Halifax was asked by the late Bishop of Oxford to give a clear distinction between what the Church of England could and could not alter. The reply had reference to Communion only in one kind, and to Reservation for the Sick. But this does not carry us far, or give us the help we need. The inability of so representative a man to give a satisfactory answer tells its own story. Meanwhile we retain our definite, clear, Anglican position, as stated above, until it is altered by lawful authority.

III. Some Practical Illustrations. By way of example, it seems worthwhile to consider the practical working out of some of the problems associated with ecclesiastical discipline and obedience, as they are found today. 1. The Use of the Athanasian Creed. It is well known that many Churchmen are of opinion that this Symbol is unsuited to general use as a Creed. We find as the result that in many Churches it is never used, while in others it is only used on the rarest occasions.

And yet the Rubric is quite clear, ordering its use on thirteen occasions in the Christian Year. What then ought we to do? Is it not our duty to obey the Rubric until the law is altered? This would seem to be the wisest, and indeed the only right course. There are very many Churchmen who would welcome relief with gratitude and heartiness, for they do not think it is possible for so highly technical a document to be recited by ordinary congregations without serious misconception.

But meanwhile, however difficult and trying it may be, loyalty seems to suggest an observance of the Rubric as it stands, while using every lawful method to obtain an alteration. 2. The Ornaments Rubric (as it is called) is a still more difficult and thorny problem. There is no need to enter into the controversy on the subject. For our present purpose, using the question as an illustration, it will suffice to say that, whether rightly or wrongly, the present law of the Church of England, as declared by the Privy Council, is that the Vestments supposed to be authorized by this Rubric are illegal.

This is the law, whether we like or dislike it, and what we ought to do is to obey it. We may object to it, may disbelieve its accuracy, but there it is. We may endeavour to get the law altered and use every effort in our power to accomplish this end, but meantime the law stands and ought to be obeyed. Unless there is obedience to constituted authorities, it is difficult to see how clergy can possibly enjoin obedience on their flocks. 3. The Use of Incense and of Reservation.

This is another illustration of the same great principle of obedience. Some years ago a number of Churchmen who were dissatisfied with what they regarded as the "secular" Court of Appeal, the Privy Council, appealed to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, on the principle of the Preface in the Prayer Book already mentioned, for a Hearing on these two subjects of Incense and Reservation. The Archbishops decided in both cases against the use of Incense and the practice of Reservation as contrary to the mind of the Church of England.

But the Judgment or Opinion of the Archbishops has not been obeyed by the very men who invoked it, and who may almost be said to have clamoured for it. And yet it was a "spiritual" Court, and ought to have possessed the highest sanction for those who would not accept the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Surely the duty of all Churchmen is clear. "We ought to obey," or else leave the Church, or at least the ministry. It is a striking fact that not a single instance can be found in the Church of England of Vestments, Lights, or Incense, from 1559 to the rise of the Tractarian Movement.

If facts mean anything, the mind of the Church is clear. 4. The Use of the Prayer Book of 1549 is another case in point. There are Churchmen who advocate this and who even do more, practice some of its methods and observances. And yet the law is clear, and the clergyman on ordination, or presentation to a benefice, solemnly promises to use the Prayer Book as it now stands "and none other except it be ordained by lawful authority". And inasmuch as no lawful authority has authorized another book, our duty is as clear as daylight; it is loyal obedience. 5.

The Eastward Position at Holy Communion may be cited as yet another illustration of the principle for which we are contending. It is well known that up to sixty years ago the position of the celebrant was invariably the North side, or North end, and that no other was known. But with the Oxford Movement came the use of the Eastward Position, and at length the question was tested before Archbishop Benson in the Lincoln Judgment. His decision on this point was that the Eastward Position was not illegal so long as the manual acts were visible.

Now I am not called upon to discuss the legality of the Archbishop's Court, or the character of his decision. Nor am I necessarily concerned with the ratification of the Archbishop's Judgment by the Privy Council. What I feel constrained to emphasize is that whether North or East the Rubric is clear, the Manual Acts must be performed "before," i.e. in sight of the people. This dominates the situation, and no man can be a loyal Churchman who does not carry out this order. If a man thinks that by taking the Eastward Position and holding the elements over his head or shoulder in order that the people may see the Manual Acts, I can but wonder whether our Reformers and Revisers ever meant that to be the interpretation of the Rubric.

And if the Celebrant turns to face North, as I have seen a Bishop do, at the prayer of Consecration, it is a position which is not found on any view of the Rubric, and is of course an actual surrender of the Eastward Position. The great thing is to be assured of the true meaning of the Rubric and obey it scrupulously, and "before the people" is absolutely clear, as Archbishop Benson pointed out in his Judgment. These five controversial questions will suffice to show the great importance of the present question of obedience to lawful authority. To those over us is committed charge and government, and we are required to face the question of their "godly admonitions," and "godly judgments".

IV. True Churchmanship.

What then is our duty in view of all these considerations? In what way can we really show ourselves to be "sober, peaceful, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England"? By obedience such as the question describes and expects. It ought to be reverent ("reverently obey"), glad ("a glad mind"), thorough ("I will endeavour myself"), and trustful obedience ("the Lord being my helper"). In these suggestions we see how obedience to Church Authority is lifted up into the spiritual realm and made part of our spiritual life. When this is realized, there will be no serious difficulty, because obedience to ecclesiastical authority will form part of that spiritual experience which is the joy of "conscientious sons of the Church of England."

Section 8. Controversy.

The preceding questions cover all that are asked of Deacons, but there are two other questions in the Ordering of Priests which need special attention. These are in some respects unique in interest and importance. The fourth in the Ordering of Priests is as follows: - "Will you be ready with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?"

I. The Necessity for Controversy.

The appeal to "banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines" is a call for controversy. We are not to seek it, and yet it will often be found to be a duty. We shall doubtless shrink from it as trying to the flesh, and yet we must not be afraid of it. St. Paul doubtless felt it to be one of the most testing times of his life to stand up against St. Peter at Antioch, and yet he did it. But we have to take care that we are not mere controversialists, for this type of man is one of the most unlovely, unspiritual, and objectionable of beings. We must not wage war for the love of it, but if we find it necessary to wage it, we must do so in love.

II. The Aspects of Controversy. Let us not think that "controversy" means nothing else than opposition to Roman Catholicism. It means very much more than that. "Erroneous and strange doctrines" are of several

sorts, and we must "be ready" to meet them all to the best of our ability. 1. One controversy will be on the Deity of Christ. Whether we have to deal with Unitarianism or Skepticism, the Godhead of our Blessed Lord will call for a defense and an advocacy which cannot be other than controversial.

And in the endeavour to "banish strange and erroneous doctrines" on this point we are fighting for the very existence of our Christianity. 2. The Atonement of Christ will also be to the forefront. And this especially, because of the controversies about sin. Sin and Redemption go together, and a denial of one will often mean a denial of the other. The facts of Sin and Atonement will need emphasis, and the views of modern thinkers will have to be faced, and since Christianity is preeminently the religion of Redemption, it will not be long before we are engaged in the work of "banishing erroneous and strange doctrines" on these vital and fundamental questions of our faith. 3.

The Divine Authority of Scripture will inevitably occupy our attention. Rationalism of various kinds makes this the center of attack, and we shall be compelled to take up an attitude against the foe of truth. Since we believe (on any theory) in a unique element in Scripture which gives it its authority, we must of necessity be prepared for warfare against those who, if allowed freedom to spread their views unchecked, would certainly injure the faith and life of uninstructed believers. 4.

The Supreme Authority of Scripture will also engage our efforts in another direction. Roman Catholicism meets us here, and in our insistence on the truths of Articles VI, XX, and XXI, we shall inevitably fall foul of opponents and be compelled to engage in controversy. Indeed, it may be truly said that practically all differences are somehow concerned with the position and character of Scripture. From the days of Celsus downwards the strongest opposition has been directed against Holy Scripture, as containing the substance of Christian belief, and whether we like it or not we shall have to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). 5.

And we shall pretty certainly have to face the practical question of the soul's direct relation to God. From two quite different quarters this truth is being assailed. Rome interposes the priest and the Church, and says that it is through the Church to Christ. We, maintaining the same position as our Reformers, urge that it is through Christ to the Church, and that no human intermediary can ever be allowed to come between the direct approach of the spirit to God. Justified by faith the soul enters into the Holiest, abides there, rejoices in the presence of God, and receives the grace of God for daily living.

Anything that interferes with this is an "erroneous and strange doctrine" which must be "banished and driven away." But in the present day a very serious attack is made on this position by a form of intellectual skepticism which tells us that knowledge of, and fellowship with Christ is impossible because we know little or nothing of Him as an Historic Figure. And thus by destroying the supernatural element in Christianity, by "removing from us the unique Personality of Christ, the souls of men are bereft of all that peace, and grace, and love which Christian experience through the ages has known and valued and spread.

Such a view robs the soul of rest and hope, cutting at the very vitals of faith and godliness. It is due no doubt to the overwhelming, and, it must be added, over-weening influence of critical studies which tend to dissolve everything that cannot be vindicated at the bar of reason and physical science. But there are deeper things in life than reason and science, and the heart will soon know its own bitterness if they take away the Lord. Such a view is easily discussed and accepted by philosophers in College rooms where they are surrounded by all the privileges, associations, and atmosphere that centuries of Christian

munificence and ethics have made possible.

But if such barren and deadening doctrines were to be proclaimed among the slums of our large cities and in the haunts of vice and crime, their utter futility would soon be seen. And all this must mean controversy, and the determination and readiness "with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines."

III. The Standard of Controversy. These doctrines are described in one simple and pregnant phrase, "contrary to God's Word". There is our perfect and constant standard of truth. The Pastoral Epistles frequently remind us of teaching which is "contrary to healthful doctrine". Isaiah appeals to the law and to the testimony (ch. 8:20). St. Paul speaks of doctrine which is "according to godliness". And the prophets were always asking, "What saith the Lord?" 1. This means that the Scriptures must be known by us.

Ignorance of Scripture will do more than anything else to play into the hands of opponents, and knowledge of Scripture will be our most powerful weapon against every form of error. 2. This means, too, that the Scriptures must be preached. Teaching and preaching the truth of Holy Scripture is our paramount duty. Like Philip with the Eunuch, we should be ready to take up Scripture at any point and preach Jesus as the Saviour and Friend of man. 3. But most of all this means that the Scriptures must be lived.

Our lives must "express the Holy Gospel we profess." The man who preaches by his life will perhaps do more in that way than in any other to safeguard his people against error. And our teaching and preaching must be positive as well as negative. As Spurgeon once said, laying down the straight stick of truth is the best way of showing the crookedness of error. No knowledge of Scripture can be too great, too minute, too thorough, for use in our necessary but difficult work of "banishing and driving away all erroneous and strange doctrines."

A thoughtful writer has called attention to the solemn fact that the people of God are being attacked along three lines: skeptical, heretical, and fanatical. The sceptic endeavours to make us disbelieve the Divine authority of the Bible, to question God's love, and even His very existence. Then comes the heretic with his new doctrines, apparently supported with scattered passages from the Bible. He will tell us how we have been mistaken, and how God is revealing Himself to progressive minds in other ways.

Last of all comes the fanatic, who does not doubt God's Word as the sceptic does, or attempt to elicit from it any new Gospel as the heretic does, but who pushes everything beyond the bounds of Scriptural authority and the limits of sober reason. Many good people are thus on the verge of a dangerous fanaticism, who are not in any way tempted to skepticism and heresy. How, then, are God's people to meet these errors? Against the sceptic, we ministers must teach them to hold fast to the absolute authority and Divine inspiration of Scripture.

Against the heretic, we must insist upon the whole of Scripture in its various parts and progressive teaching. And against the fanatic, we must walk with God in the Spirit, and thus be able to discern between the true and the false. The closer we keep to the Word of God in spiritual study and practical earnest meditation, the more thoroughly we shall be kept alive to these various errors, and have the spiritual perception to detect them, and the spiritual power to defeat them. Every error comes in some way or other from a neglect of God's Word, and every safeguard against error comes from the closest adherence thereto.

IV. The Spirit of Controversy. 1. The "faithful diligence" with which this work is to be carried out shows the importance placed upon it by our Church. It is a necessary work, a hard work, and therefore one that requires the best of our powers. It takes "diligence" to "banish and drive away". Such work is not to be done without very definite and sustained effort. 2. Another thing is very marked in this question. There is an evident and close connection between "banishing and driving away all erroneous and strange doctrines" and the general pastoral care.

After the reference to error come the words, "And to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given." This means that the care of the sheep is the paramount consideration, and must ever be the object of the shepherd. He does not wish to win any mere gladiatorial victory, but he desires so to fight and strive that his sheep may be protected and guarded. Or to change the figure, he must be careful that his flock enter no poisonous pastures, and to do this he must lead them in the green pastures of Divine truth.

If this positive spiritual view and purpose of controversy is ever kept in mind, the work of the shepherd will go forward with ever-increasing blessing. 3. And this will mean "speaking (or living) the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). We shall endeavour to see the truth for which our opponents think they are contending, and we shall conduct our controversies in faith and love. Not victory, but edification will be our aim, and in meekness we shall endeavour to instruct those who "oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:25-26). 4.

And so we shall ever keep in mind the great truth of "Principles not Party". Whatever be our party, we must never be partisan. No man worthy of the name of man can ever submit himself wholly to his party, however much he may be in general hearty sympathy with its principles. "My party right or wrong" is as vicious in religion as it is in politics. We must carefully distinguish between a partisan, an advocate, and a judge. It is never seemly for a Christian man to be a partisan, for in a partisan the great and important faculty of judgment is really not exercised.

He has committed himself to a certain line and is content to insist only on considerations which support his own opinion without any regard for evidence which is not in harmony with it. He may often have to be an advocate, but this will never mean making out the worse case to be the better, or even making the most of the evidence on his side to the ignoring of all on the opposite. But his chief and most noble function will be that of judgment, gathering up all the available facts and factors bearing on the subject, giving all a patient hearing and then out of full knowledge, balanced judgment, true experience, producing his decision.

Let us endeavour in our controversy in all the "monitions and exhortations" needed in our ministry to act the part of the judge. This is our high vocation, and everything we do should be actuated by this thought. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). 5. And it follows that in our work we shall emphasize principles and not attack men. Our opponent may be charming and our own side may repel, but in either case, in both cases, we are concerned for truth, and truth at all costs, under all circumstances.

And so the supreme need is for Consecrated Controversy. The one great object is to know the truth, and to get it known, loved, and lived. And if our life is lived in the atmosphere and under the control of the Spirit of Christ, we shall be at once fearless, loving, and righteous in our necessary warfare for Christ, His

cause, and His Church. And then, neither we nor our people will be "carried away with every blast of vain doctrine," but "established in the truth of God's Holy Gospel."

Section 9. Maintaining Peace.

The contrast between this and the question last considered is striking. The minister is to be ready to wage war, and yet to maintain peace. It is something like the twofold statement of the Gospel concerning our Lord's mission: "Peace on earth", "Not peace but a sword". The question is peculiar to the Church of England and to the Ordering of Priests and Bishops.

"Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to your charge?"

I. The Ideals.

"Quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among" our own flock are to be maintained and set forward. The value of these things lies in their being an illustration of Christlikeness. Their glory consists in their being an exemplification of the "new" commandment of our Lord, and the "brother love" of the Epistles. The "newness" quite evidently lay in the new objects of affection consequent on the new relationship to "one another" in Christ (John 13:34-35). And the prominence given in the New Testament to brother-love, not brotherly love (love because, not as brethren), is another proof of the new Christian grace. "See how these Christians love one another." And the power of these things is seen in the blessing that inevitably attends Christian unity, wherever it is realized and manifested. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" "For there the Lord commanded the blessing" (Psa. 133:1, 3). The opposite is always fatal to Christian life and work. Unity brings power; disunion produces weakness. It was with a sure spiritual insight that our Reformers included this question among those for use at Ordination. There is scarcely any part of a clergyman's work which is so fruitful in spiritual results as the endeavour to "maintain and set forwards ... quietness, peace, and love."

II. The Methods of Realization. 1. The clergyman's first work will be among his own people, and he will do his utmost to prevent or remove friction, jealousy, and misunderstandings in the Church of which he is the minister. If any "root of bitterness" should spring up between members of a congregation, and especially between Communicants, the results may easily prove heartbreaking to the minister. It is no wonder that St. Paul urges Christians to show zeal in keeping the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

If Satan can but drive in a wedge of discord between two members or two sections of a congregation, his work there can be left to produce its own dire results of spiritual barrenness. 2. The clergyman will also be able to do not a little to "maintain and set forwards ... quietness, peace, and love" among the various classes connected with his Church and parish. Political feeling often runs high, and it will be the clergyman's bounden duty to avoid all parties and emphasize in every possible way the great principles of Christianity which are equally applicable to both political sides.

It is for him to proclaim principles and not the political applications which those principles involve. Social feeling also tends to become acute as between rich and poor, a tendency that has become accentuated by that unfortunate phrase, "the classes and the masses". To the clergyman these distinctions will have to be faced with the greatest possible care. There are rich and rich, and there are poor and poor. There are godly rich and godless poor, and there are godly poor and godless rich.

Let the clergyman take care to show that Liberals should believe in the existence of conscientious Conservatives, and Conservatives in conscientious Liberals; that the rich have duties as well as privileges, and that the poor have their responsibilities as well as their disadvantages. Without pandering to the rich or truckling to the poor, without taking sides with Liberalism or Conservatism, the clergyman can still hold firmly his own political, social, and economic principles, and bring to bear what he believes to be the truth on the consciences of his people.

He can do much, perhaps more than most people, to "maintain and set forwards quietness, peace and love" among men and women of varied social grades and political principles. 3. The relations of Church and Dissent will provide yet another opportunity for fulfilling the requirement of this part of the Ordination Service. The clergyman should make friends as far as possible with the non-Church people of his parish, including the Roman Catholics if he is allowed to do so. It is one of the finest features of College life that men of different and differing views and Churches meet and live together, and there is no reason why parochial life should be inferior in this respect to the College.

The clergyman should also endeavour to discover why certain people are Nonconformists or Dissenters, or Roman Catholics, and by large-hearted sympathy to enter into their position. He may be sure that while he holds his own principles firmly he need have no fear as to the results of "maintaining and setting forwards quietness, peace and love among" the Christian people of various Churches in his parish. The clergyman has an unique opportunity of doing the work of a peacemaker, and he will lose much if he fails to respond to it. 4.

Nor may we leave out of this account the thorny question of Church parties. The question in the Ordinal has a definite bearing on this aspect of life. As we have already seen, a man can be definitely attached to a party without being a partisan, and he will not fail to remember the varied aspects of true Churchmanship which have characterized our Communion for the last three hundred and fifty years. The secret of "maintaining and setting forward peace" among Churchmen is the careful and constant distinction between principles and sympathies.

Let the principles be firmly fixed on the unmistakable rock of Divine truth, but let the sympathies go out as widely as possible to all who are endeavouring to live and labour for Christ. Never shall I forget the words of the saintly and noble Bishop Whipple of Minnesota, the Apostle of the Red Indians, as I heard them in Exeter Hall on a memorable occasion. "For thirty years I have tried to see the face of Christ in those who have differed from me."

III. The Requirements.

What sort of man must he be who is to "maintain and set forwards quietness, peace, and love"?

1. He must be filled with the Spirit of Truth. Unity must be based on Truth. Anything else will prove disastrous. First righteousness, then peace (Isa. 9:7); first pure, then peaceable (James 3:17). As it has been well put, we must not work for compromise at the expense of truth, but for comprehension within the truth. "In things essential unity, in things doubtful liberty, in all things charity." Yes, but beneath all things fidelity.

2. He must be filled with the Spirit of Love. Love to Christ elicits and compels love to man. "He who loveth God must love his brother also" (1 John 4:21). Love will express itself in sympathy, for we shall be keen-sighted enough to see things from his standpoint. And Love will show itself in tenderness. Nor will

true Love ever mean weakness, for the stronger the convictions the greater the love. It is just because we are so convinced of our own position that we can love others with a pure heart fervently.

3. And he must be filled with the Spirit of Wisdom. Truth united with Love will lead to the threefold qualifications of Wisdom, Perception, and Tact. We shall "perceive and know what things we ought to do," and we shall have "grace and power faithfully (and wisely) to perform the same." Love is not blind, but keen and far-sighted, and when love is guided by truth, and truth is inspired by love, the result is a spiritual wisdom which is from above, and will do God's work in God's way.

But we must go still deeper.

IV. The Secret.

How can this threefold spirit become ours? It can only come from a deep, true, full, spiritual life. There must be a rich experience of Christ and a real fellowship with Him. It is only as the soul draws "nearer still and nearer" to Him Who is "the Lord of Peace" that the work of ingeminating peace can be done. It is only as "the Spirit of Jesus" possesses us that we bring fruit forth, the fruit which is "love, joy, and peace," and produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness". And in the same way it will only be by a similar work of grace in the hearts of others that they will be drawn nearer together and help to bring that day when the reign of everlasting peace will commence. It has often been pointed out that when the tide is out there are little pools of water here and there on the shore, separated from each other by vast stretches of sand, and it is only when the great tide rolls in and submerges them all in its vast embrace that they become one and are united. So must it be, so will it be with our severances of heart, "our unhappy divisions," the great tide of God's love will flow deeper and fuller into each and all of our lives, and in the ocean of that love we realize the Divine ideal of love, joy, peace for evermore.

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