secured to the Bishops. This power has been exerted in no churlish manner, but in that spirit of wisdom, courage, and moderation, and in that high sense of our responsibility as the National Church of the land, which has induced us to adopt in our relations to other religious bodies the rule of St. Augustine—

"In non necessariis libertas
In necessariis unitas
Sed in omnibus caritas."

F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK.

ART. IV.—THE LIMITS OF OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS.

"WE don't know what to do with the Old Testament," was the saddening cry of a clergyman to me the other day. Personally I don't know what I should do without it. For this reason what has been helpful to me may be helpful to others. I find it the richest possible field for modern preaching. There is hardly a modern event in our crowded present-day life that cannot be illumined by the pages of Old Testament history. The lessons that are clearly drawn from those old-world events can guide us to the lessons that the same overruling Providence would have us learn to-day. The researches and criticism of scholars have their legitimate field, but one result (no doubt unintentional) has been to generate a sort of fear of the Old Testament, lest he who uses it should be guilty of misinterpretation or ignorance of the latest "Athenianism."

What Professor G. A. Smith says in his preface to his work on the "Minor Prophets" applies equally to the historical books of the Old Testament: "The prostitution of the prophets is their confinement to academic uses. One cannot conceive an ending at once more pathetic and more ridiculous to these great streams of living water than to allow them to run out in the sands of criticism and exegesis, however golden these sands may be." What he says in his following sentence of the prophets I would also claim for the historian and poet. The historian wrote and the poet sang, and "the prophets spoke for a practical purpose. They aimed at the hearts of men, and everything that scholarship can do for their writings has surely for its final aim the illustration of their witness to the ways of God with men, and its application to living questions and duties and hopes."

Surely, if our Lord and His Apostles made what some would call a free use of the Old Testament in preaching and teaching, we may do so too? Surely we may lay down as a first canon of Old Testament exegesis that *whatever interpretation or colouring our Lord and His Apostles gave to Old Testament history, poetry, or prophecy by quotations or allusions we may accept without hesitation, and work out for exegetical and homiletical purposes?*

Does it matter that the human authors did not foresee the construction or interpretation that would be put on their words? St. Peter asserts that the prophets themselves did not understand all they said, particularly in regard to what would afterwards be interpreted plainly enough of the sufferings of the Messiah. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto *us* they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into."

Does not this quotation imply that such interpretation, which could not have been given by the prophets of the old canon, is legitimate? The words of the Old Testament may not be limited in exegesis by the human horizon of the prophets; on the contrary, that fuller meaning was the intention of the Spirit of Christ that was in them. It was plain after the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this is that aspect of the Old Testament that makes its words live to-day; for in its pages we thus read of the life and work of Jesus Christ, and it is these that we are to preach as practical living truth, as good for the twentieth century as the first.

Does the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah refer to the Messiah? Some say the author did not intend his words to do so. Our Lord quotes them of Himself on the eve of His sufferings. Philip began at the same Scripture and preached Jesus.

Had the Flood and Noah's escape in the Ark, or the crossing of the Red Sea, anything primarily to do with Christian baptism? Had the story of the brazen serpent anything to do with the Crucifixion? Had the muzzling of oxen anything to do with the payment of the Christian minister? Is it conceivable that the writers of these things had any idea of the use that would be made of them? Is the use therefore wrong? Surely we may include the human authors amongst

those who ministered not unto themselves, but unto us, and make use of their work for the spread of the Gospel?

The story of Jonah, the healing of Naaman, the fate of Lot's wife, the irregular distribution of the manna, and many other incidents from the historical books, are used to illustrate vital principles or eternal truths. May we not use them too?

It will take the preacher some time to exhaust this field of interpretation if he confines himself to those incidents only from Old Testament history which are interpreted for him in other parts of Scripture. It sometimes happens that the Old Testament supplies the key to the interpretation of the story. Thus it is at the sweetening of the waters of Marah. Thus Ezekiel puts his finger on the moral failings that were at the root of Sodom's sin—failings that have wrought the downfall of every empire that has crashed into the dust. Thus does the preacher in Deuteronomy make use of the preceding history; thus does Micah of the story of Balaam. And the moral thence drawn is one which Christ Himself endorsed. The use that later New Testament writers made of the work of their Old Testament predecessors is similar to the use that later Old Testament writers made of what had gone before, but fuller and more progressive. We who have the double inheritance of both covenants may make a fuller use of both than either did or could well do.

I would claim, therefore, that it is a canon of legitimate exegesis that we have all the privileges and freedom of interpretation and application that was exercised by Old Testament prophet, or by our Lord, or by His followers. They did not alter the facts of history, nor may we, but they accepted the credibility of the writers to say the least, and made use of what was written.

It was by the preaching of Christ from the Old Testament that the Apostles and their co-workers built up the primitive Church. There are two essential premises in the argument for the Messiahship of Jesus. The one is the testimony of eye-witnesses to facts, the other is the predictions of the Old Testament. The neglect of such preaching at the present day will not persuade men to believe on Jesus as the Christ. We cannot, as Churchmen and believers, allow ourselves for one moment to be fettered by critical views which *confine* the teachings of Old Testament history or prophecy or poetry to the obscure events of the limited surroundings of the author's lifetime. It is eminently helpful to be able to discover the historical occasion of a psalm, to breathe its atmosphere, to see the hues of its local colouring, but to deny Messianic interpretations because possibly or probably the eyes of prophet, or psalmist, or historian were blind to the

future application is to throw away the trowel with which the stones of Apostolic facts were laid and cemented.

It was from the Old Testament that Apollos mightily convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. It was to the Old Testament that the Beroeans appealed as the ultimate test of the position taken by St. Paul and his helpers. It was to the Old Testament that St. Paul ultimately appealed in his apology before Agrippa, an apology which embraces all the lines of evidence and argument that could well be adduced: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Here is personal testimony to facts by a credible witness, chiefly and centrally the fact of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Here is the general reasonableness of a belief in resurrection, a national hope shared by the twelve tribes and bound up with the national religious life. Here is the practical success of work carried out in the world on the lines indicated. But above all these there is the fulfilment of what Moses and the prophets said should come.

There is no flaw in the position. It is a question of the personal attitude to the prophets—"Believest thou?" The only limit is the limit of unbelief. If we believe that the Old Testament is "the Scriptures of the prophets" we may so interpret it, and we include history and poetry with what is more technically termed prophecy. Our Lord began at *Moses* and *all* the prophets, and expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. This is the field of Old Testament interpretation, the things concerning Him. Who shall venture to limit it?

The only limit of exegesis that we are bound to observe is that laid down in Article XX., that the Church may not so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. This limit, faithfully observed, will keep our interpretations within reasonable bounds, because it will keep them in proper proportion to the whole. Christ is the centre and aim of all Old Testament exegesis. His character, His kingdom, His work, His life and death and resurrection, may be read as plainly there as in the New Testament.

If we are to wait till an imperially federated school of modern criticism has stamped a few selected passages of Old Testament as Messianic before we dare to preach Christ from the Old Testament, we shall probably end by never preaching Christ at all.

It is the fashion to talk about Primitive and Catholic Church practice. It was the universal practice of the primitive Church fearlessly to preach from the Old Testament that Jesus is the Christ. Some of the men who did so were

"illiterate amateurs." As regards modern criticism (I speak foolishly), so am I. But these same illiterate amateurs "had been with Jesus," and their preaching turned the world upside down.

C. CAMERON WALLER.

ART. V.—WHAT IS TO BECOME OF THE CHURCH?

WHAT is to become of the Church of England? I know that the question has a catch-penny air, and that because of this some of her members will be strongly tempted to dismiss it as beneath their attention. But, unless I am mistaken, there are a good many other people who are revolving this inquiry, or something very much like it, in their minds. Behind them there are many more who have not yet put their feelings into words, but nevertheless are conscious of all the anxiety which this question implies. That anxiety is, in fact, very much wider than any public expression of it which has so far been made.

There are always people ready and content to dismiss any such questionings as the work of wicked alarmists, who have some sinister ends to gain by causing uneasiness in the minds of others. There are always the persons who are so very comfortable themselves that they only want to be left alone, who do not mind by what concessions an enemy is bought off if only they themselves can be allowed to go on in their own placid way. And there are always the people who have been mesmerized by that blessed word "moderation"; who never felt enthusiasm for anything or indignation against anything; who believe, or seem to believe, that all would be well with the world if its affairs could be conducted without the help of the zealots, the enthusiasts, and the really active people who make things "hum." All these classes are likely to think that nothing threatens any serious danger to the Church, and that whatever sorrows may trouble us now will soon pass away, as sorrows have in other generations.

There is something to be said, it must at once frankly be admitted, for the plea that the Church has in the past gone through dangers every whit as serious as those which at present surround her. Before the great measures of reform were carried, which in the early part of the Victorian period so vitally and so happily changed the organization of the Church, she was, no doubt, in a very parlous state. The scandals associated with her life and the administration of her affairs had roused an indignation which was in no way