

as it left the Lords in 1887, was a useful and practical measure. It proposed to prohibit for the future the severance of the next right of presentation from the rest of the advowson, and to render illegal the mortgage of an advowson and its sale by public auction. An intending purchaser was to be obliged to obtain a certificate of his fitness to hold the right of patronage from a commission consisting of the diocesan chancellor, the archdeacon, rural dean, and two laymen appointed by the Lord Chancellor. Donatives were to be turned into presentative benefices; and the bishop was to have power to refuse institution to a nominee of the patron on the ground of physical infirmity, pecuniary embarrassment, or notorious or reputed evil life, or where less than two years had elapsed since his admission into deacon's orders. The parishioners were to have one month's notice of an intended presentation, and might submit to the bishop written objections to the proposed nominee.

Such is a brief record of the attempts at Church reform during the last six years. It is a mingled story of success and failure, in which the impetuous amongst us will, no doubt, pronounce that the latter predominates. In view, however, of this slow progress in the past, are we to give way to despair or despondency for the future? Are we to admit that the Church has no prospect of satisfactory reform except in the severance of her connection with the State? Surely not. The legislative stove may burn slow, and the chimney may smoke, but we believe that it is still possible to cook the ecclesiastical meal without setting fire to the constitutional fabric. All that is necessary is the exercise of patience and perseverance. Let the reforming friends of the Church doggedly practise these two old-fashioned virtues with the same determination as do her would-be destroyers. We shall then wring from a reluctant House of Commons, if we cannot obtain from a willing Parliament, those measures which are necessary to keep the Church abreast of the times, and to ensure her increased efficiency in the discharge of the high and holy work to which she has been called by her Heavenly Master.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.

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ART. V.—THE SERVANT OF CHRIST.

NO. VI.—COMPREHENSIVENESS.

IN the fabled times of Greece the beautiful hills of Attica were infested by a robber whose gruesome deeds have made his name proverbial even to this day. Unhappy was

the wayfaring farmer or pedlar who passed near the stronghold of Procrustes. For if he happened to be abroad that day, and caught the distant sound of steps or voices through the echoing woods, short was the time before the luckless traveller was carried up to the mountain fastness, there to be put to fiendish torture for the amusement of the reckless bandit. In that grim place was kept a bed, which only the ignorant could see without shuddering. On that terrible machine the unwilling guest was invited to repose himself after the fatigue of his journey. And then he was tied down, and the sport began. For if the bed was too short, his limbs were lopped off till it fitted; if too long, he was stretched with ropes and pulleys till he equalled its length. Then the murderous freebooter would boast with glee that wonderful indeed was the bed of his guest-chamber, for there were none whom it did not equally suit.

There is amongst ourselves in spiritual matters many a Procrustes. Many a religious man and woman of one extreme party or the other wishes to fit all characters, all dispositions, all circumstances, however various, to one hard unyielding type of their own choice and make. There is too little of practical submission to the rule of our Church that nothing is to be required but what may be proved by certain warrant of Holy Scripture. No matter what part of the character these people sacrifice, what beauty of disposition they maim, what difference of circumstances they confound, all alike who do not suit their rigid requirements they ruthlessly condemn.

The bigot theologian—in minute  
 Distinctions skilled, and doctrines unreduced  
 To practice; in debate how loud! how long!  
 How dexterous! in Christian love, how cold!  
*His* vain conceits were orthodox alone,  
 The immutable and heavenly truth, revealed  
 By God, was nought to him: he had an art,  
 A kind of hellish charm, that made the lips  
 Of truth speak falsehood; to his liking turned  
 The meaning of the text; made trifles seem  
 The marrow of salvation; to a word,  
 A name, a sect, that sounded in the ear,  
 And to the eye so many letters showed,  
 But did no more—gave value infinite;  
 Proved still *his* reasoning best, and *his* belief,  
 Though propped on fancies wild as madmen's dreams,  
 Most rational, most scriptural, most sound;  
 With mortal heresy denouncing all  
 Who in his arguments could see no force  
 On points of faith too fine for human sight,  
 And never understood in heaven, he placed  
 His everlasting hope, undoubting placed.  
 He proved all creeds false but his own, and found  
 At last his own most false—most false, because  
 He spent his time to prove all others false.

Among the vices of religious people which have hitherto hindered the spread of the mild and beneficent kingdom of our Lord in human hearts none is more cruel, gratuitous, destructive, or unchristian than the mistake of those who think that the results of faith in Jesus Christ must necessarily be all of one complexion, or of one degree, and according to the precepts of men rather than the "exceeding breadth" of the commandments of God. No enemy of God's empire could be more subtle than this tyrannous spirit of narrow censoriousness. For it creeps into the heart of the most devout, and, under the guise of a care for the honour of the faith, strangles altogether the divine gift of charity. It was this that made the devout and honourable women the readiest weapon for the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia for the expulsion of Paul and Barnabas. It is this imposition of a yoke devised by man and not ordained of God which drives away stalwart, sensible, manly characters from the influence of the Gospel as of something artificial. We may take serious warning from the state of religion in France, where the divorce between the intellect of the country and the faith as presented by the Roman Church is notorious. It is this arbitrary enactment of principles not contained in the New Testament which separates churches, and breeds the foul brood of religious intolerance. It is this disposition to call common and unclean things which God has cleansed that renders so much of modern Christianity absurd to some and distasteful to many. It is this tendency of all mankind to encrust the simplest and broadest truths with interpretations, deductions, comments, laws, customs, and beliefs of their own invention that has to multitudes cast a stumbling-block in the way, proved a most needless offence, and disastrously abridged that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. This is that spirit of arrogant pedantry which has so often hindered the cause of foreign missions, imposing on converts from heathenism the ecclesiastical customs, language, and even dress of a civilization totally distinct from their own, and associating in their minds with the cause of Christ the necessity of mere local accidents as indelibly as the universal principles of justice, temperance, and faith.

It is this spirit of intolerance that has disgraced professedly Christian institutions in the past; Christianity itself cannot be disgraced by the mistakes of its blind adherents, but always remains sublime and pure. "In zeal, bigotry and persecution for any party or opinion, however praiseworthy they may appear to weak men of our own principles, produce infinite calamities among mankind, and are highly criminal in their own nature; and yet how many persons, eminent for

piety, suffer such monstrous and absurd principles of action to take root in their minds under the colour of virtues!"<sup>1</sup> How well has such a spirit been sketched in the familiar lines of Samuel Butler!—

He was of that stubborn crew  
Of errant saints, whom all men grant  
To be the true Church militant ;  
Such as do build their faith upon  
The holy text of pike and gun ;  
Decide all controversies by  
Infallible artillery,  
And prove their doctrine orthodox  
By "apostolic" blows and knocks ;  
Call fire and sword and desolation  
A godly thorough reformation,  
Which always be carried on  
And still be doing, never done ;  
As if religion were intended  
For nothing else but to be mended.  
A sect whose chief devotion lies  
In odd, perverse antipathies ;  
In falling out with that or this,  
And finding somewhat still amiss ;  
More peevish, cross, and splenetic  
Than dog distract, or monkey sick ;  
That with more care keep holiday  
The wrong, than others the right way ;  
Compound for sins they are inclined to,  
By damning those they have no mind to ;  
Still so perverse and opposite  
As if they worshipp'd God for spite ;  
The self-same thing they will abhor  
One way, and long another for.

"The doctrine which, from the very first origin of religious dissensions, has been held by bigots of all sects, when condensed into a few words and stripped of rhetorical disguise, is simply this: 'I am in the right, and you are in the wrong. When you are the stronger, you ought to tolerate me; for it is your duty to tolerate truth. But when I am the stronger, I shall persecute you; for it is my duty to persecute error.'"<sup>2</sup>

O love-destroying, cursèd Bigotry ;  
Cursèd in heaven, but cursèd more in hell !  
The infidel, who turn'd his impious war  
Against the walls of Zion, on the Rock  
Of Ages built, and higher than the clouds,  
Sinned, and received his due reward ; but she  
Within her walls sinned more ; of Ignorance  
Begot, her daughter Persecution walk'd  
The earth from age to age, and drank the blood  
Of saints.<sup>3</sup>

But God is of no nation, nor is His Church the offspring of

<sup>1</sup> Addison.

<sup>2</sup> Macaulay.

<sup>3</sup> Pollok.

any exclusive civilization. Jesus Christ belongs to all the world. Manifold is the face of Nature which discloses God. Not one single leaf is precisely the same as another. The varying proportions of heat and cold, sun and rain, soil and position, land and sea, His agents obeying His laws, what an infinite variety these produce in the animal and vegetable kingdoms! Here a gorgeous tropical profusion of every kind of the most brilliant beauty of foliage and flower, with splendid colours on every bird and insect, and with strange, powerful forms of animal life; there, the quiet vegetation and milder types of temperate civilization. Here, the bright fascination of lonely snow-clad mountain-tops, where the thin, pellucid air is radiant morning and evening with unwonted colours, and the sun and the stars seem near; there, the humble beauty of a motionless pool in a wood, lustrous with slumbering water-lilies, and the broken lights falling through canopies of wondrous green. Here, the grandeur of a storm at sea, with black clouds and foaming waters; there, the exquisite structure of the earliest forms of life, too small to be detected by any but the strongest microscope. Just in the same way, manifold too are the types of human character, which He has permitted to be created and made in His own image through that power of vitality and reproduction which He has given to His human family. Like the leaves in the wood, however many myriad millions of human beings come into the world, no two seem to be exactly alike, even if they were born at the same hour of the same parents. We have no need to send our minds to distant nations for illustrations of how far one type of character can be from another; we have only each of us to run over the first names that occur in the list of our own acquaintance, and we cannot help being struck with the inexhaustible wealth of differences that they exhibit. Manifold again are the dealings of God with all these divergent minds. Some He brings home to Himself by happiness, others by sorrow; some by poverty, others by wealth; some by ease and tranquillity, others by hard work; some by praise, others by blame; some by health, others by sickness; some in a coal-mine or a cellar, others in a palace. Even if you knew every single circumstance and thought you were aware of every possible characteristic of any individual, it would be impossible for you to predict the upshot. So fertile are the resources of a Mind which is Almighty. Manifold, again, are the operations of God in history. From countless complications, each ever new, He has made good at length to spring. Of no two nations has the career been alike; each has been chequered with varying measure of light and shade, of crime and good; no one system has run through all; yet all have been permitted to contribute

to the well-being of the world. "O Lord, how wonderful are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all! How unsearchable are Thy riches, and Thy ways past finding out! At sundry times and in divers manners hast Thou revealed Thyself!"

We need not be surprised, then, when we have thought for a time of the infinite manifoldness of the Father of all things, to recognise also that there are untold shades of difference in the Christian character. We can no longer allow condemnation to be passed by censorious people on others who, in matters not essential, arrange their conduct differently from themselves. We shall, in fact, expect that the consciences of such various sorts of persons will have different kinds of enlightenment. What suits one man or family well enough, we are prepared to find possibly poisonous to another. Consider a moment even what abundance of motives God allows and accepts. With one man, like Bishop Butler, religion may be entirely a matter of prudence, a balance of probabilities. With another, it may be almost a hereditary grace, handed on from parent to child, and never questioned. With another, the motive that leads to Christ may be sympathy with Christendom in general. With another, it may be mainly the need of some solemnizing influence on the life, of some brightening hope, however dim, for the future. With another, it may be the conviction of the reason that, without belief in God and the soul, no morality, and therefore no happiness, is possible. With another, the "schoolmaster" may be adoration of the divinely mysterious and beautiful. Another may be convinced chiefly by the historical proofs for Christianity. Another may be won over chiefly by the internal evidence. The efficient thought in another may be the supernatural spread of Christianity, in spite of difficulties from within and from without. Another may be attracted mainly by the divine beauty of the character and words of our Lord. The mind of another may be impelled by the fear of sin, and the justice and mercy of the way of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ. To the conscience of another, Jesus Christ speaks with absolute directness. These motives and causes of belief are not equal in value, truth, and importance; and they often work one with another in the same mind; but if they lead in the end to the one eternal process, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved," they are all, so far, instruments of God's Holy Spirit. Some minds may look more to the satisfaction of emotion, others of philosophical reason, others to the best motive of all, the love of God. In all these we may see the guidance of the Spirit leading on to the Cross. Now, if we only consider what largely different styles of religious sentiment and practice these different motives and

causes, and such as these, would produce, we shall at once see how impertinent, arrogant, and cruel it is for one style to set itself up and say, "Mine is the only correct standard of feeling and practice; all others beside me are made to be pitied; mine is the true fashion, the true opinion; I am the voice of the Church; I freely express my condemnation of all those who presume to act differently from what I think proper." We see in this light the immense importance of our Saviour saying, "Judge not that ye be not judged." And we gladly echo the words of St. Paul: "To me it is a very small thing that I be judged of you or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. . . . If ye be dead with Christ from the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 'Touch not,' 'Taste not,' 'Handle not,' after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

But, while we submit to no human interference with our Christian liberty, while we would die rather than acknowledge the tyranny of a human Procrustes, there is one standard by which all who are called Christians will adjust their conduct and their conscience. We must be conformed to the image of God's Son. That image is left us in His life, His character, His words, His actions. There is the undying principle which appeals alike to all times, all places, all circumstances, all dispositions. Whatever may be the complexity of the events which happen to us, there we shall find a light which will never fail to make our duty clear. Our Lord was born (after the flesh) of Hebrew race, yet His words are as broad as the whole world. There is not one of them which is less suitable to the humblest and most ignorant wanderer over Arctic snows than to the most cultured philosopher, or the most powerful king. In Him satisfaction was found alike by Jewish noble, by Roman centurion, by the learned member of the Sanhedrim, by the foreign Syro-Phœnician woman, by ignorant fishermen, by despised tax-gatherer, by wild demoniac, by the pure maid of the mountain hamlet, by doubting Thomas, by questioning Philip, by the warm-hearted Sons of Thunder, by impetuous Peter, by cultivated Paul. All alike discovered in Him what they wanted, the better way, the real truth, the new life, redemption and salvation. For there was in Him one grand principle of unity which all in their degree could grasp and follow, when enlightened by His wisdom; and that principle was, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." He showed once for all by His Divine life and His redeeming death that love is the fulfilling of the Law. It is by making our consciences answer in all humility to Him, and to Him alone, that we shall, in our innumerable varieties, fulfil the various purposes of God. We accept, of course, the

terms of agreement on which we associate ourselves together in a Church; and in all moral and civil matters we listen as far as possible to that voice of the Church which is expressed in the Christian laws of a Christian country. We are equally respectful to the importance of the opinion of the whole body of believers when they were united in the early ages of Christianity. But that is not the point on which we are now insisting. It is this: that if we submit to the dictation of other men, or of any institutions, however valuable, as to our conduct in matters of conscience between God and ourselves, we shall be robbing Him of the treasures which He has scattered up and down the world, each to be preserved and developed in its own excellence for His glory and the good of the whole. To Christ alone we stand or fall. His commandments are not grievous. Far from maiming or obstructing any part of us, they will, by the help of His Spirit, bring the more fruit to perfection. One will show more courage, another more wisdom, another more devoutness, another more enthusiasm, another more activity, another common-sense, another humility, another nobleness, another generosity, another affection, another singleness of heart, another kindness, another patience, another contentment, or self-control, or strictness of self-discipline, or expansiveness of sympathies, or forethought, or good-nature, or whatever his gift may be, and these in different proportions; but of all these excellences there is but one source, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the manifestations of His Power and Presence in different soils. They are the results of a free and unfettered growth of each natural character in Him. They are His grace, free from all meddling, manifesting itself in a new virtue for every character, a new excellence for every circumstance as it comes.

It is, then, our privilege and duty to vindicate the Christian religion from all unwarranted attempts of human tyranny, however plausible. As we go about through the world, we shall meet with many presumptuous pretences, many censorious tongues. If anybody tells us to do this or that as a matter of Christian allegiance, it is our business to ask him to prove it from Scripture. If the proof fails, we listen to him no more. We can take the advice of public opinion, or preacher, or Church, where it offers useful suggestions which we can see to be in conformity with the mind of Christ; but we take nothing that they say upon absolute trust without thought or examination. And while we recognise no human institutions as affecting our private conduct or character in matters of conscience, except as a guide and not as a law, we guard against passing judgment ourselves upon others. While we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us



free, we must beware of curtailing that same liberty for our fellow-Christians. While, where Christ has left no commands, we acknowledge none, we must be careful not to impose on our brother our own scruples, tastes, and opinions. Just as we should be as ready to admire a classical cathedral as a Gothic, so we should not attempt to set up one type of practice for everybody. As it is to Christ alone that we ourselves acknowledge our own responsibility, so we must remember that it is equally He alone who condemns or acquits our neighbour. It is our glory to follow the merciful Saviour who would not harshly condemn even the sinful woman taken in adultery, and never to imitate Procrustes.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.



#### ART. VI.—THE SPANISH CHURCH.

CIRCUMSTANCES have recently occurred which have awakened a considerable amount of interest in the Church which bears the above title, and criticism, both adverse to and favourable, has made many familiar with a subject that was hardly thought of in many circles. It may, therefore, not be out of place to set down a few notes, made during a recent visit to Spain, to help those who have not yet enjoyed that advantage.

The title selected above, "The Spanish Church," is adopted for two reasons. First, the Church of Rome, though dominant in Spain for so long a time, and though acknowledged by her people, is not a *national* Church; and second, because the Church of which I write is the only one either aspiring to that name, or with any prospect of being so.

The Church of Rome, it is true, has interfered in the politics of Spain, has moulded them entirely to her own fancy for close upon four hundred years, has given tone to society, and we may say administered its laws, but yet remained an alien after all. Her centre was Rome, not Madrid. Her interests were those of the city of the seven hills, not of the Spanish, and she drew largely on the resources of the country whenever she could, and when the support of the pretended successor of St. Peter required it. Spain was, moreover, almost the last of the nations of Europe to acknowledge the supremacy of the See of Rome. And it was not until the reign of Philip II. that religious tyranny reached its climax, Rome became supreme, and the rising light of the Reformation effectually shut out, and Spain entered on that downward course which brought her from the proud position which she then occupied,