

as that is, that forms the centre and heart of the Gospel and of Evangelical truth. Neither the written word, nor the Church, nor the creeds, nor any one doctrine or body of doctrines, can ever hold the supreme place in the Christian faith assigned to its Divine Lord, nor give the knowledge, the life, and peace to the soul that comes alone from our fellowship with Him. To hold firmly to this central truth will give us, as I believe, if not the immediate solution, yet at least the clue to the ultimate solution of the vexed question of the basis of authority in religion.



The Parochial Clergyman's Special Perils.

BY THE REV. R. C. JOYNT, M.A.

THEY are not a few who, I surmise, think that the clergyman has a life almost immune from the ills that the layman's flesh and spirit are heir to. They except, possibly, the missionary hero; but they hear such Scriptures as the Epistle for Sexagesima Sunday, and its tale of "necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments," and the rest, with an accompanying mental process of contrast between the Apostle's "perils" and the snug cosiness of the slippered pastor by the average vicarage fireside. The "parson" has, they will admit, one heavy day in the week; but for the other six his task is the care of a few classes, and ministry to such sick persons as are not so well educated as to be above the need of his pastoral counsel.

It is thought that he has no personal part as a combatant in the strenuous strife against temptation of various kinds which besets the less sheltered and less privileged men of commerce, labour and law. Added to this, has he not, it is supposed, immense spiritual endowments, which, like untainted sunbeams in fœtid air, will keep him from falling where frailer men may fail?

Alas! the object of all this misconception knows how far it

lies from the realm of fact, and that such pictures belong to the very antipodes of experience. He knows well, none better, that he *has* a place of the very highest privilege and opportunity, and that he *has* access at first hand, as others, to the fountains of supply which are able to make all grace abound towards him and every trusting soul. But, for the rest, he is a man, carrying a man's sin-disposed heart within him, whilst by virtue of his office he is exposed to quite special perils, which his brother in the store, or the field, or the office, knows but little of.

1. *Self-neglect*.—A fierce warfare rages round the Pastoral Epistles, and, like everything else human and Divine, they are being asked to give an account of themselves, and their author, which will satisfy the demands of an age that doubts, though it will not say so, whether there ought to be any depths into which the plummet of human knowledge may not descend. But for our present purpose it is enough to observe the significant fact that in each of the three the cry for "mercy" is inserted between the familiar "grace and peace" of the other Epistles' opening greeting. And how suited to-day are the appeals throughout these letters to the young brethren to take heed to themselves! For it is the whole man who preaches, not only the mind which prompts the running pen. *Take heed to thyself*. The warning comes well from the man who had at an earlier point in his own ministry dreaded the possibility of his being "a castaway," as unfit for service, though he had so long preached to others. "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." How easy to pass into the way of inculcating habits of private prayer, Bible-study, self-examination, self-control, and mortification of the flesh, on the flock! How easy it is to do this, and to do it with fervour, force, feeling, and conviction, while all the time a rebuking voice within asks solemn questions about the teacher's own devotional and personal habits! Private prayer—how *much* and how real? The hidden life—how will it be seen to have been "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by

Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun ;
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks."

For our present purpose these lines are too severe ; but they embody the thought that it is possible to be punctiliously correct in our views, and to make every opinion we hold to stand firm on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, and all the while to be cold in heart, slack in duty, lifeless and loveless in spirit—in short, to be living out of communion with our Master. His most terrible denunciations are reserved for those who made high claims to rigid orthodoxy and Scriptural views, while the heart was far from Him and His Father. Let it be repeated that a fire may be most correctly laid, with all its combustible materials suitably graded and ordered, and yet give no heat. Why ? All is correct, but it is not alight ! When the fire comes, perhaps the paper, wood, and the rest, are no longer seen ; but there is *fire*, and *it* is seen, felt, and effective. It kindles warmth in all that approach it ; it is a power. Its materials have only changed their form ; they have not perished ; they are at work as fire. No precautionary word is necessary here to guard against the imputation that right thinking—for that is "orthodoxy"—is disparaged. Not at all. The writer is warning himself against the real peril of holding the truth in unrighteousness, idleness, lovelessness, bitterness, perfunctoriness, "shibbolethness."

4. *Ignorance*.—One of our good papers has been discussing in recent months the question of the reading of the clergy. Whether rightly or wrongly, the impression does prevail that the Evangelical clergy as a body are not so studious, and consequently not so learned, as the other division (ill-omened word !) of ecclesiastical opinion. There does not appear to be any valid reason why this should be so, if it is so. There are, of course, individual scholars of the very greatest eminence who adorn the honoured title of Evangelical. But they are thought to be but few—*Nantes in gurgite vasto*. Certain it is that they

are very conspicuous on occasions when it is important to give a show of learning to the platform, and the great frequency of their appearance suggests that there are not large reserves of scholarship to fall back upon. And this great duty of study—hard, systematic, persistent study—has been pressed upon us all with all the resources of argument, backed by the achievements of those who have gained distinction in the field of letters, sacred and secular. It is said that Cambridge examiners sometimes sigh for the return of the times when candidates for honours could write such verses as used to be sent in by a great (Evangelical) Bishop of to-day. But certain it is that the man who is to exercise influence in our times *must* study. Not that this is a learned age; I think it is anything but that. But it is a time when enough is written in daily papers, magazines, and Acts of Parliament about education and books to make men feel that they ought to know more than they do, and that those who teach them ought to prove that they have done what their hearers know, in many cases, that they themselves have not done—*i.e.*, read the books that they read the reviews of, or see to be reviewed in the very cheapest daily prints.

The CHURCHMAN would be thanked by many if it recommended to the clergy, from time to time, courses of books for reading. Some men do not read because they do not know *what* to read; others because they do not want to read; and others because they do not know *how* to read systematically, or to select from the world of books what they most need. They are, so to speak, in a vast library; but the very vastness of its treasures awes and frightens them, and they feel that when *so much* is to be accomplished, and so little time and ability available for the doing of it, it is hardly worth while trying to do anything at all—so they pick up the morning paper.

The following has been found helpful as an ideal to be aimed at by a hard-worked clergyman:

1. Rise daily at 6 to 6.30.
2. Read the New Testament Lesson for the day in Greek.

3. Prayers.
4. Read the Old Testament Lesson, looking out all references.
5. Learn by heart six verses of Holy Scripture.
6. Spend half an hour at Hebrew.
7. Spend one hour at some *solid, difficult* book.
8. Read a chapter after midday meal and prayer.
9. Read the Evening Lesson in Greek before going to bed.
10. Visit "house to house" three afternoons or evenings a week, giving the other days to the sick, the congregation, etc.
11. Aim at great particularity and definiteness in intercessory prayer.

Who will guard the guardians? who shepherd the pastors? We are longing for help for our own souls and for our own work. Our Bishops are overworked; they cannot, for want of time, be to us what we long to be to our flocks. By the time the episcopal influence has been distilled to us through the filtering-beds of Archdeacon and Rural Dean, and diocesan magazine and Charge, it has lost the power which personal contact between soul and soul alone can impart. We have great, great needs. "My God shall supply all your need." He will; but we must be "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." We must know what our special perils are, and in God's power must fight and so overcome them.



The Water-mark in the Pentateuch.

BY THE REV. G. H. ROUSE, D.D.

IT is said that on one occasion the question of the genuineness of a will came before a court of law. The evidence seemed forcible in its favour, and the decision was about to be given on that side, but the judge first asked to see the document. He held it up to the light to see the water-mark, and he found