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P R I N C E T O N

R E V I E W .

Benj. B. Warfield

By Whom, all things; for Whom, all things.

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CHURCH ECONOMICS.

MANY years ago the present writer edited a monthly periodical intended to strengthen an earnest church, then in too little contact with other branches of the Christian family, but willing enough to consider suggestions from any reputable quarter. A correspondence appeared in its pages on the duty of a community, situated as is the Irish Presbyterian Church, to provide for its orphans. To many the idea appeared interesting and creditable to its advocates, but impracticable. Fifteen years have passed, and, mainly through the honest toil of a minister, the Rev. Dr. William Johnston, and it is fair to add, his wife, that church—of nearly six hundred congregations—has now an organization and a fund through which any honest Presbyterian parents can be assured that if God in his providence removed them from their young children, they would be educated, cared for, and given such a start in life as their parents if spared would have tried to afford them. This and kindred arrangements give a real meaning to the phrase “mother church,” and well represent to her poorest members the sympathy and the care of the Church’s head,—an aspect in which it has been the glory of the Presbyterian Church to present the Divine Redeemer. Encouraged by this fragment of a history, the writer ventures to offer a few suggestions which, tho primarily contemplating the organization to which he has hereditary and fond attachment, are yet capable of application, for the most part, to other portions of the great and growing family of Christ. They are offered as suggestions, not as matured plans, and without overweening confidence or such paternal partiality as would resent the idea of modifications, possible improvements, or even absolute rejection.

One other prefatory statement may be pardoned. The churches of America are not to be supposed to lie under censure if the fact is made clear that some things that might be, have not yet been, realized. Considering how young some of them are, how youthful the country is, how wide the spaces to be covered with church machinery, and how varied the elements to be worked upon, the wonder to all candid and educated persons will be that so much has been effected. The erection of edifices; the establishment of a religious press that is the wonder of Christendom; the founding of schools, colleges, and seminaries; the shaping of boards, and the maintenance of a high order of Christian literature—these attest the marvellous activity which the blessing of God has given to American Protestantism. Not to call into existence, therefore, but to encourage and guide enormous and blessed forces, and certainly not to reflect upon the past as if it had been lost, is the object of this article.

In an average American town an active minister is compelled to expatiate over the greater part of its streets, avenues, and squares. He must follow his people, see them in their homes, visit the sick, look after the poor, and bury the dead. A certain proportion of time, energy, and even cost of locomotion, is thus demanded, which would be saved if his people were within a definite district. A certain law of affinities now makes, and will continue to make, this in a degree necessary. Even in British cities where the parochial system prevails there has long existed a free-church system, with churches so described, not because they are free in the matter of expense,—that applies rather to parish churches,—but free of the rigid control exercised over the parish churches, and free in that the seat-holders choose their own pastor. In many cities the best attended and most popular and influential churches have been of this character, and the worshippers have come from many and widely different parishes. But wise and observant men, with a view to minimize the interference with generally useful and fixed arrangements, have been laboring to assign districts to such churches, as nearly as possible like parishes, so as to give to the clergy a sense of responsibility for the people of the district, and to the people a sense of right in the clergy and claim to their services.

Something of this kind might be advantageously done by

American churches. Each denomination might district a town or a city, assigning to each congregation its portion of territory, the dwellers on which would be, if not attached to another congregation, its charge, and taught to feel that they had a presumptive right to the services of its minister. The idea of a definite and manageable territory is not only helpful, it is stimulating to the mind of a clergyman. He despairs over the vague and inaccessible space which is traversed alike by himself and by several other clergymen who happen to have "hearers," as he has, scattered around promiscuously. Give him a fixed and not hopelessly large section, let him know that for all of his denomination, or of no denomination within it, who are not definitely provided for in other churches, he is responsible, and you lead him naturally to say, "This is my part of the field. I must cultivate it to the best of my power, gather out the weeds, plant the good seed, and watch over its growth." To drop the figure and be practical: he will think of making a census of the people; of accomplishing a visitation of all the dwellings by himself or his fellow-laborers; of keeping an eye on nuisances, social or otherwise, and eliminating them; of drawing the untaught children under good influences, and bringing the classes of the district into healthy mutual contact; while all learn to look to him as a common friend, and to the place of worship as the centre of beneficent influences felt over all the region. Ministers being men before their ordination, and carrying the human element along with them into parochial work, will feel a certain healthy stimulus from the improving condition of the districts around them; and even the people will not be entirely unmoved by the spectacle. Nor would any clergyman's real influence for good suffer if he was heard saying in all sincerity to good Mr. Smith: "I should be happy to have you, of course, but my brother, Mr. Thompson, in whose district you reside, is as good a clergyman as you can have, and you would get good and do good by falling into the line of worshippers and workers with him." The popular theory is that the chief aim of a minister is to get a crowd of followers; any policy that dispels this illusion is beneficial in the long-run. A division of our territory in towns, and in time in the country, into as close an approach to parishes as once existed in New England, and for the pur-

poses above indicated, with others which we do not delay to specify, is the first suggestion towards the higher utilization of our resources.

It is not a long stride from the foregoing to the providing of an official residence for the ministry. In many instances, of course, congregations are amply able to do this for themselves, and it would be as economical usually for the community as it is for the individual to own the residence, which must be provided in one form or other. If the minister is to be maintained by the people for the doing of their work, he must be given a house, or the means to pay for one. It would be cheaper in the majority of cases, to have the house for him as the congregation's property. In many instances congregations would require external aid, as in the erection of the church edifice, and then a scheme for "parsonages," "manses," or whatever other name may be deemed best for clergymen's official residences, would be as fitting as a Board of Church Erection, of whose operations, in point of fact, this might become an extension. Among the benefits which far more than counterbalance incidental and occasional disadvantages, some fall among the people, and some into the hands of the clergy. Residence within easy distance of the church and in the district is ordinarily secured. There may be some cases where this would involve sacrifices; but it is fairly open to question if a minister should not endure them. A missionary living five miles from his field, and coming on given days of the week to his "office" for some hours, was known to the present writer; but his influence was slight and his incumbency brief. When a new minister comes to a congregation it is a nice and delicate question where he will settle. In the "genteel" part of the town? Then the common folk imagine a great gulf fixed between him and them. In the plainer part of it? Then the "genteel" folk feel as if he cut himself off from them, and indeed reflected in some degree on their liberality and the standing of the congregation. But let there be a residence provided, and the minister has no care at the time when all his energies and thoughts are needed for his new work; and he can no more be criticised than the President for living in the White House, or the governor of the State in the official residence. In time the manse comes to have many

a sacred memory connected with it, suggestive to its inhabitants and to its visitors. "Here is where Alexander," or Hodge, or McIlvaine, or Bacon, or Payson "studied, prayed, and talked with many a soul about Christ and eternal life." The minister who would not feel an inspiration from such a memory must be exceptionally constituted. In time a library belonging to the manse might spring up, and the minister's dear study companions, instead of being flung around at his death for half their worth from an auctioneer's bench, go to his successor. Property is increasing in value over four fifths of this continent, and as a rule money laid out in such ways would be a good and profitable investment. A man settled in a house where his children were born, whence, perhaps, some of them went to the mansions above, where his wife's hand and taste were conspicuous in a thousand little arrangements and practical ingenuities, would be less of a bird of passage than a lodger, boarder, or tenant, and something would be done toward longer pastorates, which in the end will be found a gain in a settled and orderly community. But even on the rotating plan, as our Methodist brethren well know, the official residence would be a prudent investment, and an increase of power for good to the congregation.

If it be alleged that in some instances ministers, being unmarried, would not require homes, it is sufficient to say that a celibate clergy is never encouraged in Protestantism, and that in many instances the temptation to this undesirable and incomplete state of existence would be diminished by the providing of a home in which "the Bishop" could set the example of a blameless home-life with his helpful wife, and their children in subjection. One pure and godly home, in the nature of the case under the eyes of a whole district, is itself an elevating force that is not to be despised. One other consideration only we shall indicate as applying to the newer regions of the country. When a minister goes to a town, hires a "hall," and boards at the hotel, the average townsman looks on him as making an experiment, and holds aloof till he sees how the thing is going to work. But if the minister and his adherents set about the erection of a church—building an official residence for the pastor—there is a very articulate language in the step. It is practically to say to the citizen: We have come here, and we

mean to stay; if we *are* weak, there is a sympathetic and self-denying strong body behind us; if you think of joining us, you may as well join us now as later. This unspoken message is intelligible to the average American.

While glancing at the material resources of a congregation, it is not quite out of place to allude to a feeling which may be in other minds as strongly as in the writer's, and which finds indefinite expression in view of neat, attractive, and often costly church-buildings. What a pity that they cannot be utilized to a greater extent during the week! Yet there are difficulties in practice. We have in most of the Protestant churches no consecration of a formal kind; but there is the sacredness of uses and of associations which we would not willingly ignore. The best people feel an incongruity between the social amusements of life and the worship of the Lord's day in the same "audience-chamber"—to employ for once a bad phrase that indicates hearing as the great business of the assembled worshippers. It is difficult enough for most persons, and especially for the young, with rapidly moving minds, to concentrate the thoughts on the exercises of the holy day; but if to the common distracting forces there be added memories of social encounters, droll situations, amusing comicalities, recalled by pew and platform, the difficulty is increased. On this account we would have the church proper as far as possible reserved for church uses—for praise, prayer, preaching, sacraments, and kindred services such as evangelistic and missionary gatherings. But where there are lecture and Sabbath-school rooms annexed, it is surely wise to connect them as far as possible with the week-day life of the people. Why should not a working-men's club be accommodated? Why should not a reading-room invite the young men who, poorly lodged, lounge about in the evenings when free from work and gravitate towards undesirable places? Why should not the people of the congregation place there the reading matter which is sometimes a sore vexation to the orderly housekeeper when it has done its work? As to Ladies' Employment Societies, Missionary Unions, and the like, there is no need to write. But the Kindergarten, the Loan Fund Committee, the Dorcas Society, and even the cooking-class, might well enough find space under the hospitable roof of the lecture-

room, and some, who otherwise would not learn it, may thus find the way to the church, and the feeling may be fixed in the popular mind that the church stands for all humanizing, elevating and helpful forces. This would give trouble and cost something, it may be said. Granted; but it would be worth all the cost in the fruits. It is worth while to bridge over the chasm between the non-pew-owners and the church; and it is all the more needed in a land like ours—committed, and rightfully committed, to the voluntary system, and the separation of Church and State.

To present a single example: in a neighborhood where there is a large proportion of working-men a minister with two good qualities—manliness and common-sense—helps them to form a “mutual benefit club.” It is so arranged that the modest weekly subscription will give relief to sick members, and afford a needed donation to a family when death saddens the home. It provides, perhaps, a cheerful room with heat, light, and reading matter for the members in the evenings. It is accommodated by the church. It has a monthly meeting for business, and for quiet talks. The minister is a great but unostentatious force in it. His hand does not disdain that of the carpenter, the miner, or even the hod-carrier. He is there a man among men, a working-man among his fellows. There are times for kindly, solemn, divine words. The wires of sincere social sympathy are being stretched from his heart to theirs, and when the strain comes, through them the light and heat of heavenly fires can run. “We are in trouble, wife; Janie looks as if she were not long for this world; the minister, where I am going to-night, is a kind man; I think I’ll tell him about our Janie.” And he does; a responsive word cheers him; a kindly visit to his lowly home brings God and all good near to the family; another brings the saving truth to the mind of sinking Janie; the father is there, sometimes, when the prayer by her bedside seems to lift her and her worn-out mother to the gate of heaven. The hand hardened with toil goes up again and again to wipe away the tears—why shed, he cannot tell. No more can he explain the calm which comes to him when the minister speaks simple words of truth and tenderness over the pale still form of Janie. Henceforth the minister and the cause he repre-

sents are linked in the mind of Janie's father with her dear image and memory; and when he says, "Wife; I'd like to go to the church, Sunday," and he goes, and hears, and gets memorable glimpses of the heavenly world, what is it but the electric energy, which God and not man made, running along fitting channels which man—Christian and wise—has been slowly preparing? And such results are reached with men who otherwise would be approached by the selfish agitator, and welcomed into the drinking-place and solaced with cards, dice, and rum; the divine ministry of grace is honored, society is helped, and an ample reward is had for care, thought, money, and personal labor. One may grow morbidly afraid of threatening class divisions in a country like ours, especially if the numerous happy family ceased to be well fed; but aside from its value as a preventive and protective policy, sustained effort like this yields a present return a hundred-fold.

Passing now to another aspect of church economics, we venture a word regarding the needed aid to a proportion of the candidates for the ministry. And to avoid misapprehension, let us say at the outset three things. (*a*) A proportion of most desirable aspirants to the sacred office require and should receive pecuniary aid. (*b*) Every college-bred man is indebted to a certain extent to eleemosynary aid in the buildings, in the foundations, endowments, library, and other elements of college equipment. But it is not felt in the same sense in which a hundred dollars a year given to the student is felt to be eleemosynary. (*c*) The need of artificial arrangements of the beneficiary kind, through which many admirable men have been helped in their early career, ought to be less and less with growing educational facilities and increasing means and forms of employment not incompatible with the prosecution of college studies. In no spirit of reflection on the past, therefore, and in no heartless disregard of the honorable aspirations of struggling young men in the present, is an alteration in the plan of educational funds suggested. On the present plan, a youth who is deemed a desirable person to be encouraged to study for the ministry is awarded, simply on the ground of this favorable estimate, a certain sum of money—not always enough to do more than supplement his means. It may turn out that he does not in the

end prosecute his studies. He may not develop the intellectual or the moral qualities of which he gave promise and on the ground of which the aid was very properly given. Church courts are likely to consider, when a candidate is presented with some less hopeful elements in his examinations, that he has been counted exceptionally zealous and earnest or he would not have been taken up by their boards; and furthermore, that so much having been invested in him already, it is a pity to throw it away by discouraging him. It is not to the discredit of kind-hearted churchmen that they feel these considerations. And in a certain proportion of the recipients of such aid a sense of dependence is produced. In a certain proportion the spirit of self-reliance is less cultivated than it might otherwise be. In a certain proportion of cases the beneficiary is tempted to say within himself, "The church took me up, took me out of the store or off the farm, and the church is bound to take care of me." And finally, a certain proportion of students in our colleges, whose friends take care of them, knowing as they do, of course, of the beneficiary arrangements for theological students, are tempted to say to themselves and to one another, "I am not going with that crowd," and to turn away from any consideration of the claims of the ministry on them. It is true, if all were deeply spiritual, or felt as many do regarding the system, they would not so reason, nor would the occasional evils above named arise. But we have to do not with the ideal but with the actual young man, and a wise ecclesiastical statesmanship takes account of human nature as it is.

Suppose, however, that the money, instead of being given in sums of a hundred or two hundred dollars to students commended as hopeful candidates, were formally and openly designated as a "foundation," "bursary," or "scholarship" available for the reward of progress that reached a certain standard, not even excluding the competitive element. The successful man receives the money with no loss of self-respect, but rather with the legitimate feeling of having earned it. He does not go out of the category of ordinary students, for it was open to them all to compete for the substantial reward. He prosecutes his studies under the influence of an honorable stimulus, and the very money he wins and uses, instead of lowering, raises him in

the eyes of his fellow-students. In the operation of a system of which this arrangement would be the feature, accuracy of knowledge and thoroughness of examination would become a necessity. Goodness of heart would not offset defective preparation; the standard of ministerial education would, to say the least, not be lowered; and the standing of the clergy would be raised—itsself a most desirable object.

Objections to this will, of course, occur to any one familiar and content with the existing system. It may be alleged that the proposed plan leaves young men to get ready for college without aid, and so works badly at the outset. But in point of fact only a small proportion of beneficiaries receive aid before entering college, and in law and medicine there is no want of candidates, the standard of admission being the same to them as to intending theological students. There is no fund of which we know for youths who aspire to be lawyers or doctors.

It may be feared that the operation of such a plan as this would, in the first instance, diminish the number of candidates for the ministry, and so embarrass the churches and impede the noblest of all work. To this it is sufficient to reply that the change should be made gradually, and in such a way as to carry along the intelligent sympathy of ministers, church courts, colleges, and parents disposed to encourage their sons to seek the noblest of offices. And it is not, perhaps, too much to say that a certain temporary reduction of the candidates for pulpits might not be a serious evil. Congregations, in too many cases, are demoralized on the subject of ministerial maintenance by the number of competitors painfully within their reach, and a pressure in any direction that would force the question away from the calculations of trustees, "On how little can he live?" would be a clear gain.

It would involve, some may think, the creation of much new machinery and the abandonment of some of the old. This is not, however, necessary. Let a denomination that spends, say, fifty thousand dollars a year on the existing plan turn in this much money annually to its colleges and seminaries, in which all the appliances for its custody and application already exist, and the work is done. The agencies for raising the funds may remain unaltered, and it is not improbable that larger contributions

would be given, when it is well understood that a high standard of scholarship is a *sine qua non* to the enjoyment of the money. The limits of an article preclude the further discussion of details.

From this part of our educational machinery it is no violent transition to the institutions of learning themselves. Whether a large number of small colleges and seminaries, or a smaller number of large, is the better plan in the end, is a vexed question, with weighty authorities on both sides. Probably the circumstances of the advocates, as they happen to be in old and established or in new and struggling institutions, exercise a real tho not consciously recognized influence on their minds. On this question we do not enter. The decision does not affect the view we venture to express, namely, that money and resources are in danger of being wasted on the present system. Suppose a denomination has five millions a year to give to education? It is surely wise to lay it out, not where there may happen to be zealous and urgent educators pushing their claims, but where it is the most needed, has the widest influence and the best promise of continuance. A volunteer force in the States and Territories in war time would best serve the country by being under the direction of a war-office or a commander-in-chief who surveyed the whole field, saw where ground is to be taken or kept, where a blow is to be struck or a weak spot defended. The same principle surely applies here. Churches commonly receive and pass upon reports from the institutions they sustain. A committee of men familiar with such forms of work might well be constituted, charged with the examination of the whole field, the selection of new centres, the removal, if necessary, of existing appliances to better fields, and indeed all the action necessary to get the most for the present and the future from the millions devoted to this end. The "parochial mind," while sound and clear on what affects the internal affairs of the parish, is not certain to take a wise and dispassionate view of what is for the good of a church stretching, as most of our great churches do, across a continent. Lest we should seem to prejudge some particular case, let an example be taken from another department. A church edifice is to be built in a new settlement. There are competing sites. One is central, and likely to be so always. The other is on one side, but a well-to-do member will

give it free of cost and a good subscription to boot. It is chosen ; but five years have not passed until its out-of-the-way situation makes the building of another a necessity. A little money was saved in the first instance ; but it was "penny-wise, pound-foolish" economy in the end. So it may well enough be in colleges and even seminaries. We have lived through the Log-cabin college era. We have reached the stage when organization, contemplating the permanent needs of a great whole, is required. That an excellent man gives his house and time for a college, and asks for the public support, is not by itself any adequate reason for giving it. The inadequacy, uncertainty of the issue, infelicity of place, and inevitable personal elements introduced by the history, may be a positive discouragement to subsequent and wise efforts. A great element in the apparatus of a great Christian body should not be dependent on the fortuitous tact, ability, or perseverance of a college agent. It should have the intelligent sanction of a competent and trusted board, representing and considering the whole, and so be able to rely on the practical co-operation of the whole. No well-governed kingdom is defended by fortresses put up at the public cost where a farmer happens to offer ground, or a builder finds time and stone on his hand. A competent authority determines strategic points. The children of light ought to be as wise in their administration as the children of this world.

We ought to add, that with the foresight which, in many things, has marked New England, a "college society" on the lines indicated has long been in existence within its territories. Whether it has realized all the advantages which its founders contemplated, we are not able to say ; but of the capabilities of such an agency there can be no reasonable doubt. The Protestant churches, notwithstanding all the one-sided reflections upon them as if in an obstinate conflict with science, are, and have been, the best, wisest, and most self-denying friends of high education. There is not the least reason to apprehend their abandonment of this field of labor for human good ; and it is of the utmost moment that their gifts, sympathies, and efforts should be not only inspired by the loftiest aims, but that they should be directed and utilized by the best practical wisdom.

Before venturing another and final suggestion, one or two preliminary statements may be permitted to prepare the mind of the reader for its consideration.

(1) The management of common benevolent funds in the Protestant churches has been so prudent, economical, and successful as to bear comparison with that of corresponding secular associations. The openness, the well-defined responsibility, and the Christian character of the management have, under God's blessing, contributed to this result. There have been conspicuous losses suffered by too confiding persons, as in Cincinnati, but no such calamity has befallen Protestant contributors. No reasonable fear need be entertained of their fair reputation being forfeited.

(2) The clerical profession does not stand in the same position with that of law or medicine. No calculation is made as to lawyers' or doctors' fees, of the rates at which they who earned them can live. But this is all too often done with ministers. One result is that their facilities for providing "for their own," for orphans or widows, are few and limited. Any one who has watched, as the present writer has done for thirty years, the incomes and the families of ministers on both sides of the ocean; the victories over straitened means; the amount of money given away; the start in life afforded to the children; the deficiencies of life maintained under difficulties; and the general success in life of the children of the parsonage, will realize that "the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich." But these compensations constitute no reason against the use of such wise and concerted measures as might lighten anxieties, lift Christian persons out of the category of receivers of bounty, and promote forethought and independence of feeling.

(3) There are insurance companies in abundance over the land, but a certain knowledge of business life is necessary to discriminate among them. Young ministers have not commonly that knowledge; and other objections, on which we need not linger, sometimes lie against their availing themselves of their advantages. The result is that in too many cases the early death of a minister leaves wife and children in want, only to be mitigated by the kindness of the congregation witnessing and sharing the bereavement, or by the donations of a precarious relief fund—

precarious in this regard, that its means commonly depend on fluctuating collections. How much trial gentle, refined, and reticent women have suffered in this way it is not difficult to imagine.

There is no practical difficulty in the way of a great church founding a Widows' Fund under any name that seems fit, to which every young minister may be enjoined to contribute a large sum in the first year of his pastorate, and a small annual subscription during his life, from the proceeds of which an annuity may be paid his widow, if in God's providence he should leave a widow, during her life, and his children until they have reached the years of self-support. Such a fund would in time be the recipient of donations and bequests; but apart from this it would become at an early period adequate to the securing of bereaved families from dependence, and of maintaining in the minds of the bereaved the sense of self-respect and assured freedom from want. The payment of a large sum in the outset is practicable, because, ordinarily, a young minister is then unmarried, and can easily live on less than at a later time. Nor would it be an evil if in many cases he had to defer the joys and cares of a household owing to this very obligation. By the time he could prudently become the head of a house he would have acquired some degree of that practical knowledge of the world and of life's details which one does not secure commonly in a seminary. If it be alleged that some ministers do not marry or leave dependants, then on this plan they contribute so much to the comfort and advantage of their brethren in their peace of mind, and in the provision for their children. This membership, not being dependent on a particular congregation, nor a continued large payment, would be easily kept up; and it would be no slight relief to many a hard-worked Christian lady to know that if God took her husband, she would not have the cross of want added to the sorrow of widowhood.

JOHN HALL.

and literary critics? Can faith in these days make headway against reason, and especially against the instructed reason of positive science and the illuminated time-spirit? These questions are often asked, and they admit and require a distinct and positive answer.

The lines of evidence and argument which are decisive of the great truths with which faith need concern itself are equally open to all men who are capable of cool reflection. Science often hinders rather than helps to the exercise of such reflection by limiting the attention to special activities and special relations, by the glare and bewilderment of brilliant discoveries, by the narrow conceit of independence or novelty of opinion, and by the excitement attendant upon the reception of a paradoxical theory. The activity of its defenders and the novelty of its subject-matter may so preoccupy the mind as to shut out those familiar relations which would decide the argument with a simpler and more limited understanding. Faith, so far as it is an intellectual process, being when philosophically conceived either an intuitive or inductive act upon moral or spiritual data, requires concentrated attention to a few comprehensive but easily apprehensible facts and relations. These facts and relations are given, or rather they are offered, to every man's experience and to every man's reflection. They concern God, duty, immortality, personality, moral perfection, sin, guilt, redemption, on the one hand, and the acts and manifestations of God in providence and human history which are suited to man's condition. The man in common life is tempted only to ridicule the atheism of Physicus, and having no special reverence for authority, he pronounces positively, "The fool hath said in his heart, No God." He smiles at the laborious piety of Mr. Spencer in charging impiety upon the man who thinks of God as a Father, and professes to know that he may worship Him; for to him personality is a very positive and dignified fact, and he cannot even understand what Mr. Spencer means. The new ethics he practically rejects and abhors, because he has rights to defend and sacred duties to perform, and a private and family and social life to live, with its manifold obligations and its needed laws and restraints. His difficulties about the supernatural were all settled when he had occasion to use prayer or to trust in the guidance of Providence. A rev-

elation in which there is no supernatural would be improbable and one-sided to him—too vapid and mean either to live or die by. Critical difficulties about the Old Testament or the New, and the solutions of them, he leaves to scholars to decide, having ample warrant for all which, as a believer in Christ, he is called to accept. Having decisive reasons for all that he is called on or able to believe, his faith is completely rational.

He may be perplexed and disturbed by what he hears and reads of scientific atheism and philosophical naturalism, but if he falls back upon what he believes, and confines his attention to this and the reasons for holding it, his faith is unmoved, and out of a convinced understanding he fights the battle of life, by faith in his Divine Master. More than this: he helps to keep faith alive on the earth, as he gives his testimony to that truth of which he has become doubly convinced by the most satisfactory of all trials, the trial of personal experience, the trial of a life that is hidden with Christ in God, and often the trial of a death which is anticipated and overcome by faith.

The strength of faith in any period and in any community depends on the number of individual souls who accept these truths as practical principles and the energy with which their inner and outer life are controlled by them. Whether the argument in respect to the other questions and lines of thought seems to be the stronger or weaker, or whether fewer or more individuals take the unbelieving or the believing side, so long as earnest men believe the supernatural Christ with rational conviction induced by moral and spiritual evidence, and act out their faith in energetic and zealous Christian living, faith can never collapse. It is then in this direction that the activities of all believing men should be turned to gain strength and prevalence for their practical convictions on the broad and obvious grounds by which Christianity must stand or fall. It is in this sense that the truth is always so significant, and pre-eminently at the present time, that Christianity is not a philosophy, nor a history, nor a theology, but a Life. It is because Christianity is attacked from so many quarters, and what is assumed to be essential in it is assailed with so much zeal and plausibility on grounds that are familiar to but few, that these strong arguments should be brought into the foreground, while those which are lim-

ited to specialists or are of inferior significance should be occasionally or sparingly used. It were better to abandon every outwork and redoubt, even the strongest and most capable of successful defence, than to be driven out of a single position. The loss of a weak position is nothing, but the disgrace of not having known it to be defenceless is injurious to any cause. The real weakness of the Christian cause as it is often defended lies in the ignorance on the part of its friends of the real strength of the arguments by which it stands. Whether still other sharp lessons of temporary defeat or disgrace shall be needed to enforce wiser judgments remains to be proved. While the defenders of the Christian faith, as we have argued, have no reason for fear, or even for misgiving, they have no occasion for bravado. The frequency with which these obvious precepts of wisdom have often been disregarded gives point and emphasis to the remark that one of the most convincing proofs of the divine authority of Christianity is that it has survived so long in spite of its defenders.

NOAH PORTER.