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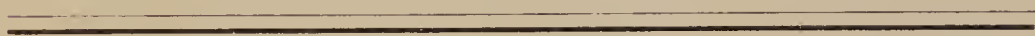
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THE

TEACHING OFFICE OF THE CHURCH.





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BY

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## THE TEACHING OFFICE OF THE CHURCH.\*

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“Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—  
Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

We learn from the first chapter of Acts that Christ showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of the apostles forty days, and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. We have four, more or less independent, histories of these forty days. Circumstances mentioned by one historian are omitted by another, so that all must be collated in order to obtain a full account of the parting instructions of Christ to his disciples. The passage just recited, however, contains the substance of his last injunctions. According to the evangelist Matthew, our Lord, on the morning of his resurrection, appeared to the women who visited his sepulchre, and said to them, “All hail! Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him they worshipped him. It was on that mountain, and to those worshipping disciples, that Jesus addressed the words of the text.

If special interest and authority are due to any one communication of Christ more than to others, they must attach to words uttered under these peculiar circumstances. He had finished his work on earth; he had risen from the dead; he was on the eve of his final departure; he was now constituting his Church; he was in the act of delivering its charter. He then and there gave his disciples their commission, prescribed their duties, and gave them the promise of his perpetual presence.

To whom is the commission given? What duty does it prescribe? How is that duty to be performed? What are the powers here conveyed? And what is the import of the promise here given? These are questions on which volumes have been written, and on whose solution the most momentous interests depend.

I propose to call your attention to only one of these questions, viz.: How is the duty prescribed in this commission to be performed? or how

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is the end here set before the Church to be accomplished? We answer, by teaching.

This appears in the first place from the nature of the end to be accomplished, and from the express words of the commission. The command is to make disciples of all nations. A disciple, however, is both a follower and a learner. If the nations are to be made the disciples of Christ, they must know his doctrines and obey his commands. This is to be done by baptism and by teaching. The command is to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching. These are, therefore, the two divinely-appointed means for attaining the end contemplated.

Baptism, as a Christian ordinance, is a washing with water in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Its main idea is that of consecration. The person baptized takes God the Father to be his father, Jesus Christ his Son to be his Lord and Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost to be his sanctifier. That is, he accepts the covenant of grace and professes allegiance to his covenant God. Every one therefore who is baptized becomes a disciple. He is enrolled among the professed children of God and worshippers of Christ.

Baptism, however, in the case of adults implies faith. It is in fact the public avowal of faith. And faith supposes knowledge. No man can take God to be his father unless he knows who God is. Nor can he take Christ to be his Redeemer unless he knows who Christ is and what he has done. Nor can he take the Holy Ghost to be his sanctifier unless acquainted with his person and office. Knowledge lies at the foundation of all religion, and therefore Christ has made it the great comprehensive duty of his Church to teach. She does nothing unless she does this, and she accomplishes all other parts of her mission just in proportion as she fulfills this, her first and greatest duty.

II. In the second place, the paramount importance of this duty appears from the kind of knowledge which is necessary to make men the true and worthy disciples of Christ. It will not be denied that the Church is bound to teach what God has revealed in his word. If, then, we would understand the nature of the duty Christ has enjoined upon his Church we must consider that system of truth which he has commanded her to communicate to all nations. It comprehends a knowledge of the being and attributes of God and of his relation to the world. These, however, are the profoundest themes of human thought; the most difficult subjects to be rightly comprehended, and yet absolutely essential to all true religion. The God, moreover, whom we are to make known, is revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He must be received and worshipped as such by every man who becomes a Christian. This cannot be done without knowledge, and this knowledge can only be communicated by teaching. Even in a Christian country it requires early and long-



continued instruction to imbue the mind with any correct apprehension of the nature of God as he is revealed in the Bible. Among heathen nations the task must be an hundred fold more difficult. The pagan mind is prepossessed with false conceptions of the divine Being: the terms by which he is designated are all associated with degraded ideas of his nature. The very medium of instruction has to be created. A proposition which to our minds, and in our sense of the words employed, expresses truth, must of necessity convey error to the minds of those who attach a different meaning to the words we use. What is God to the mind of a heathen? What is law? What is sin? What is virtue? Not what we mean by these terms, but something altogether different. Without a miracle, correct knowledge can be communicated to such minds only by a long process of explanations or corrections. The heathen have a great deal to unlearn before they can learn anything aright. Their minds must be emptied of the foul and deformed images with which they are filled, before it is possible that the forms of purity and truth can enter and dwell there.

The same remarks are applicable to what the Bible teaches concerning man; his origin, his apostasy, his present state, his future destiny. No man can be a Christian without a competent knowledge of these subjects. They are, however, subjects in themselves of great difficulty; the prepossessions of the heathen are opposed to the scriptural representations on these topics; all their previous opinions and convictions must be renounced, before the truth concerning the nature and condition of man can be communicated to their minds.

Again, to be Christians, men must understand the plan of salvation; they must know Jesus Christ, the constitution of his person, and the nature of his work; they must know how we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, and the nature and office of the Holy Spirit.

Again, to be Christians, men must know the law of God, that perfect rule of duty which unfolds the obligations which we owe to him as creatures, as sinners, and as the subjects of redemption. But the heathen, alas, have been taught to call evil good, and good evil, to put sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet. Their moral perceptions are darkened and their moral sensibilities hardened; so that the acquisition of correct knowledge on their part of the pure law of God must be a tedious and gradual operation.

Such is a meagre outline of the knowledge which the Church is bound to communicate, and without which the nations cannot be saved. We have no adequate conception of the magnitude or difficulty of the task. We forget that we have been slowly acquiring this knowledge all our lives; that our mothers gave us our first lessons in this divine science

before we could speak; that from our infancy it has been constantly inculcated in the family, in the sanctuary and in the school-room; that this heavenly light has always beamed around us and upon us from the Bible, from the institutions of the country and from innumerable other sources. Can the heathen then learn it in a day? Because the English language is familiar to us, can it be taught to foreigners in an hour? If we undertake the work of making disciples of all nations, we ought to understand what it is we have to do. It is no work of miracle or magic. As far as we are concerned it is a sober, rational enterprise. We undertake to change the opinions and convictions of all the inhabitants of the world on the whole department of religious and moral truth, the widest domain of human knowledge. This is the work which Christ has assigned to his Church. And it is to be accomplished by the ordinary process of teaching; not by inspiration, nor by miraculous interference of any kind. It is, indeed, a stupendous work, and no man can address himself to it in a proper spirit who does not so regard it. It would be comparatively a small matter to bring all nations to speak our language and to adopt the civil and social institutions of our country. Stupendous as is the work assigned us, we cannot flinch from it. It must be done, and we must do it.

There is another aspect of this subject which must not be overlooked. The system of truth of which we have spoken cannot be taught in abstract propositions, as though it were a mere philosophy. It must be taught by the Church, just as God has taught it in his word; in history, in types, in allegories, in prophecies, in psalms, in didactic assertions, in exhortations, warnings and precepts. No man can understand the truths of the Bible without understanding the Bible itself. He must know the history of the creation, of the fall and of God's dealings with his ancient people. He must be acquainted with the Mosaic institutions, and with the experience of the saints as recorded in the Psalms. He must know the history of Christ as predicted by the prophets and as recorded by the evangelists. He must hear Christ's own words and read for himself what the apostles have delivered. If we teach Christianity, we must teach the Bible and the whole Bible. We must convey the truth to others in the very facts and forms in which God has communicated it to us. The two are absolutely inseparable; and woe to those who would attempt to divide them—who would undertake to tell men, in their own way and in their own forms, what they think the Bible means, by popular discourse or otherwise, instead of teaching the Bible itself. Let us then, Christian brethren, calmly look our work distinctly in the face. The precise, definite task which Christ has enjoined upon his Church is to teach the Bible, and the whole Bible, to every creature under heaven.

It never could have entered into the mind of any man that this work

could be accomplished in any other way than by a regular process of education, were it not for some vague impression that the work of the Holy Spirit in some way supersedes the necessity of the ordinary methods of instruction. This is a fatal delusion. The Bible teaches us that the Spirit operates with and by the truth upon the hearts of men. As far as we know, either from Scripture or observation, he never operates on the minds of adults in any other way. The knowledge of the truth is therefore a preliminary condition to the experience of this divine influence. This knowledge the Spirit does not communicate. He has revealed it in the word. It is the business of the Church to make it known. The office of the Church and that of the Spirit are therefore perfectly distinct. Both are necessary. Neither supersedes the other. The Church teaches the truth; the Spirit gives that truth effect. He opens the mind to perceive the excellence of the things of God, he applies them to the conscience, he writes them upon the heart; but the truth must be known before it is thus effectually applied to the sanctification and salvation of the soul. It is therefore in perfect consistency with the doctrine of the Spirit's influence that we assert the absolute necessity of knowledge, and therefore of instruction.

III. A third argument in support of the doctrine that the great duty of the Church is to teach is drawn from the fact that the Church from the beginning of the world has, by divine appointment, been an educational institute. This is and ever has been her distinctive character. She is indeed an association for the worship of God and for the cure of souls, but she is peculiarly and distinctively an organization for maintaining and promoting the truth.

To the ancient Church were committed the oracles of God, not only to be preserved and transmitted, but to be taught to the people. The whole ritual service was a mode of teaching. The morning and evening sacrifice was a daily lesson on sin and atonement. Every rite was the visible form of some religious truth. Every festival was a commemoration and a prophecy. The Sabbath was a perpetual annunciation of the creation of the world and of the being of a personal God. There were thus daily, monthly and yearly services all designed for the instruction of the people. The sabbatical year and the year of jubilee were prolonged periods for setting forth the great truths of morals and redemption. Besides all this there was a distinct order of men, one-twelfth of the whole population, set apart for this purpose. The priests were devoted to the service of the temple, the august school of God, and the Levites scattered over the whole land. Into this system the synagogues were incorporated, where the Scriptures were read and expounded to the people. It must also be borne in mind that the whole literature of the Hebrews was religious. Their only histories were the



record of God's dealings with his Church; their poetry was devotional or didactic; their fictions were divine parables; their orators, inspired prophets. We cannot conceive of a set of institutions better adapted to imbue a whole nation with religious knowledge than those ordained of God under the old dispensation.

Another very instructive fact is this: when God designed to extend the offer of salvation beyond the limits of Judea he subjected the surrounding nations for three centuries to a course of preliminary education. Two hundred and eighty years before Christ the Scriptures, or at least the Pentateuch, were translated into Greek, the language of the civilized world. Jews were congregated in every city of the Roman empire. Synagogues were everywhere established, in which the true God was worshipped and his word expounded. Hundreds and thousands of devout proselytes were gathered from among the heathen and instructed out of the law and the prophets, and taught to look for the salvation that was to come out of Zion. A broad foundation was thus silently and laboriously laid for the Christian Church in every part of the civilized world. It was the special mission of the apostles to go over the Roman empire and, selecting those points where the ground had been thus previously prepared, to establish churches as centres of light to the surrounding regions. They always when they entered a city went first to the synagogue, and there endeavored to convince the Jews and proselytes that Jesus was the Christ, and that there was no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved. Sometimes the whole assembly, with their elders, believed and became a Christian church. At others only a portion embraced the gospel. Those the apostles separated and organized into a new church or Christian synagogue.

We are apt to forget all this, and to think the work of the apostles was analogous to that of our modern missionaries. It was, however, essentially different. The apostles preached in a great measure to the worshippers of Jehovah; to men whose hearts and consciences had been educated under his word and institutions; to men who had comparatively little to unlearn, whose general views of the nature of religion were correct, and who were in earnest expectation of the salvation which the apostles preached, and with whom they could communicate in a competent language. We need not remark on the different character and condition of the people among whom the modern messengers of the gospel are called to labor; men whose minds are dark, degraded and inaccessible, having no ideas in common with us and no terms of correct religious import. Our missionaries have to do the long preparatory work, which the apostles found done to their hands. We should therefore commit a fatal error if we should infer from the itinerant character of the apostles' labors that our missionaries should pass in like manner from city



to city, abiding only a few months at any one place. It would be most unreasonable to expect that this mode of operating would now be attended with a success analogous to that which followed similar labors of the apostles, under circumstances essentially different. The great fact however is undeniable and most instructive, that God did prepare the way for the apostles, by subjecting the population of the chief cities of the Roman empire, for nearly three centuries, to a preliminary process of religious culture.

As then God made the Church under the old dispensation an educational institute, as he prepared the way for the dissemination of the gospel by previously causing Judaism to be extensively diffused, so also in the organization of the Christian Church, he gave it a distinctive educational character. Christ appointed a set of men as teachers; he made provision for their being continued; he promised to be with them in all ages, and to give them by his Spirit the qualifications for their work. When the apostles went forth, it was in the character of teachers. They everywhere established churches, which were schools presided over by *διδασκαλοι* [teachers]. Aptness to teach was made an essential requisite for the office of a Presbyter. Ministers were commanded to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine or instruction, that their profiting might appear unto all. In support of the doctrine that the great business of the Church is to teach, that this is the divinely-appointed means by which she is to make disciples, we appeal, therefore, not to this or that particular passage of Scripture, but to the whole design or organization of the Church as laid down in the word of God.

IV. What God has thus clearly taught in his word, he has not less impressively taught by his providence. If the history of the Church teaches any one lesson more distinctly than any other, it is that just in proportion as she has been faithful as a teacher, she has been successful in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom; and just in proportion as she has failed in teaching, she failed in everything pure and good.

In proof of this point we appeal in the first instance to the contrast between the Romish and Protestant portions of Christendom. The characteristic difference between the popish and Protestant churches is that the former is a ritual and the latter a teaching Church. In the former the minister is a priest, in the latter he is an instructor. The functions of the Romish priesthood are the offering of sacrifices, the administration of rites, and the absolution of penitents. Public worship in the Romish Church is conducted in a language which the people do not understand, and consists largely in ceremonies which they do not comprehend. The Scriptures are a sealed book among them, and the necessity of knowledge to faith or holiness is expressly denied. The consequence is that under a dead uniformity of outward show there is

in the Romish Church a mass of ignorance, heresy, irreligion, superstition, immorality, such as probably never existed within the pale of any Christian communion on earth.

On the other hand, among Protestants the minister is a teacher. He leads indeed in the worship of the sanctuary and he administers the sacraments, but his great official business is to minister in word and doctrine. The sacraments in his hands are not magic rites, but methods of instruction, as well as seals of the covenant. It is in Protestant countries, accordingly, we find knowledge and religion in a far higher state than in any other portions of the world.

Again, if we compare different Protestant countries we shall find that religion flourishes uniformly and everywhere exactly in proportion as the Church performs her duty as a teacher. In England, notwithstanding the abundant provision made for the support of the clergy, yet from the enormous extent of many of the parishes and from the predominance of the liturgical element in the constitution of the Established Church, a large part of the population has been left uninstructed, and, were it not for the exertions of other denominations, would be in a state little better than heathenism. In Scotland, on the other hand, religion is more generally diffused and has a stronger hold on the mass of the people than in any other country in the world. The reason is that the Church of Scotland has from the beginning been pre-eminently a teaching Church. Notwithstanding the trammels of an establishment and patronage under which she has acted, she understood her vocation; she recognized her duty to teach the people, and the whole people, Christianity as a system of doctrines and duties, and she has therefore succeeded in making Scotland the most religious country in the world.

It matters not, however, where we look, wherever we find a teaching Church there we find religion prosperous; and wherever we find a ritual, an indolent, or a ranting or merely declaiming Church, there we find religion degenerated either into superstition or fanaticism.

As a final appeal on this subject we refer to the history of missions. There are only three methods by which Christianity has ever been established among heathen nations. The first is that adopted by the apostles, who established churches in various important places where the ground had been long under a process of preparatory culture, which churches became centres of radiation for the surrounding people. From such centres the gospel was extended in ever-widening circles, until their circumferences met and compassed the whole Roman world.

The second method is that in which, by force or fraud, a people has been brought to submit to Christian rites, and to an external compliance with the forms of Christian worship. Thus the Franks were converted under Clovis, and the Saxons under Charlemagne; and thus was Chris-

tianity introduced into Mexico and Peru, and by the Jesuits into Paraguay, China and the Indies. The characteristic of this method is that it is conversion without instruction. It implies no change of opinions, no change of heart, no change of life. It is simply a change of name and external ceremonies. In some cases this nominal conversion is followed sooner or later by instruction, and a real reception of the gospel is the ultimate result. The Saxons, who long remained baptized heathen, are now the stamina of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. In other cases instruction does not follow, and then the consequence is that the people remain Christians only in name, or, when the external pressure is removed, they relapse into heathenism. The Indians of Mexico and Peru are no more Christians now than they were in the days of Cortez and Pizarro, and the once flourishing missions of the Jesuits, with their thousands and even millions of converts, have perished without leaving a trace behind them.

The third method of propagating the gospel is a process of education ; that is, actually teaching the people, so that they come to know God and Jesus Christ his Son, and the way of salvation through him. Unless God works miracles, unless he subverts all the revealed or known methods of his operation, this is the only means by which the nations can be converted. This is the method which all Protestant churches have been forced to adopt, and it is the only one that has ever been successful. No instance can be produced of the establishment of the gospel in a heathen land by any other means. This was the course pursued by the faithful Moravians in Greenland, in the West Indies and in this country. They uniformly established permanent missions and laboriously taught the people. This was the method adopted by Elliot and Brainerd. To this mode of procedure, after many experiments and failures, the missionaries were obliged to resort in Tahiti, the Sandwich Islands, in India and South Africa.

It is a very humble and self-denying work thus to teach the first principles of the oracles of God ; it is a very slow process ; there is no éclat about it ; it is very trying to the faith of the missionaries and to the patience of the churches. But it is God's appointment. It is as much a law of his gracious dispensation that the minds of men must be imbued with the divine knowledge before the Spirit quickens them into life, as it is a law of his providence that the seed must first be properly deposited in the earth before, by his rain and sun, he calls forth the beautiful and bountiful harvest. No man expects to raise a crop of wheat by casting seed broadcast in swamps, forests and jungles ; and just as little reason have we to expect a harvest of souls or the secure and permanent establishment of the gospel in heathen lands by any such short and easy method of disseminating truth. God will not depart



from his wise ordinations to gratify either our ease or love of excitement. If we would bring our sheaves to his garner we must go forth with tears and patient labor, bearing the precious seed of truth.

This is the true apostolic method. The apostles converted the world by teaching. They established churches at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Ephesus, and at Rome, just as we are now laboring to establish churches at Lodiana, Furrukhabad, Agra, and Allahabad. The only difference is that the apostles found the ground cleared, broken up, and prepared for the reception of the seed, while our poor missionaries, with but a small portion of their strength or grace, have to go into the jungles and forests, and clear the ground as well as sow the seed. The same God, however, who wrought effectually in the apostles, is mighty in the weaker messengers whom he has sent to do this harder work. In both cases the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man. But do not let us add to all the other trials and discouragements of our missionaries the heavy burden of our impatience. Let us not forget that the work to be done is, of necessity, in its first stages a very slow work—that the harvest does not follow immediately after seed-time.

That teaching, then, is the great vocation of the Church, that by no other means can she make disciples of all nations, is evident—1. From the express command of Christ, in the commission given to his disciples. 2. From the nature of that system of doctrines, the knowledge and cordial belief of which are essential to salvation. 3. From the nature, design, and constitution of the Church, as revealed in the Scriptures; and, 4. From the whole history of the Church, and especially from the whole history of missions.

It may, however, be asked, What is meant by teaching? What is this educational process which is so necessary to the propagation of the gospel? We answer, it is that process by which men are brought really to know what the Bible reveals. The end to be attained is the actual communication of this divine knowledge. There are, of course, different methods of instruction, some better adapted to one class of learners, and some to another; no one of which should be neglected. The principal agencies which God has put into our hands for this purpose are the pulpit, the school-room, and the press. All these are employed in Christian countries, and all must be used among the heathen. The danger is, that a disproportionate importance be given to one of these methods of instruction to the neglect of the others. The great temptation is to over-value the first. This arises from several sources.

1. In the first place, we are apt to attach to the word preaching, as used in the Bible, the sense which it now has in common life. We mean by preaching, the public and authoritative enunciation of the gospel; whereas, in the Bible, the word comprehends all methods of communi-

cating divine truth. When Paul says, "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," he does not mean that the public oral proclamation of the gospel is the only method of saving sinners; but that God had determined to save men by the gospel, and not by the wisdom of this world. Human wisdom is entirely inadequate to that end, as the world by wisdom knew not God, and therefore God determined to save them by the gospel, which Paul calls the true or hidden wisdom. Any method by which that wisdom is communicated comes within the compass of that foolishness of preaching of which Paul speaks. The parent, the teacher, the author, are all preachers in the scriptural sense of the word, so far as they are engaged in holding forth the word of life. The power is in the truth, not in the channel or method of communication. It is this transferring to the Bible the modern restricted meaning of the word *preaching* which has led many good men to undervalue other methods of instruction. They suppose that all the Scriptures say about preaching is to be understood of the oral enunciation of the gospel, whereas it relates to the inculcation of divine truth, in any and all ways by which it can be conveyed to the human mind.

2. But secondly, we do not make due allowance for the difference between the state of the heathen and that of our own people. Because the majority of persons in a Christian land are prepared, in a good degree, to understand a public discourse, we are apt to take it for granted that this method of instruction is equally adapted to the heathen. A moment's reflection, however, is sufficient to correct this mistake. A certain degree of previous knowledge is requisite to enable us to profit by public discourses; and we accordingly find, the world over, that the effect of public preaching is just in proportion to the previous religious training of the hearers.

3. In the third place, as we know from Scripture and experience that many single sentences of the word of God contain truth enough to save the soul, and as the Spirit of God does sometimes make one such sentence fasten on the conscience, and from that single germ, by his inward teaching, evolves enough of the system of truth to enable the sinner to receive Christ, to the saving of the soul, it is very natural for us to be anxious to scatter the truth as rapidly and as widely as possible. And this is a good and sufficient reason why, even in heathen countries, the public proclamation of the gospel should never be neglected, but on the contrary, should be as assiduously employed as possible: we know not but God may give some one truth saving power in some poor sinner's heart. Of the seed sown on the wayside, among the rocks or thorns, it is possible that some one grain, here and there, may take root and bring forth fruit. But no harvest is ever raised in that way. Neither has any heathen nation ever been converted by the itinerant proclamation of the gospel.

To raise grain enough to feed our families or to sustain a nation, we must plough and harrow, as well as sow; and to save souls enough to found a church or convert a nation, we must slowly and laboriously indoctrinate the people in the knowledge of the Bible.

The mistake to which we have referred is one into which the missionaries themselves almost uniformly fall, at the beginning; and those new to the work are apt to think that their more experienced brethren rely too little on preaching, and too much on the slower method of instruction. A missionary from Ceylon told me that soon after his arrival in that field, he ventured to suggest his doubts on this subject to the oldest and certainly one of the ablest and most devoted of his brethren. That elder brother was then ill, lying on his bed, opposite an open window. He said to his doubting brother, From that window you can cast your eye over a number of villages, embowered in trees: as I lie here, I can in my mind go from house to house through all those villages, and tell you the names and character of every family. In a course of years I visited them so often, I so often conversed with them and preached to them, that I know them all, and know them intimately; yet I never saw any fruit from all that labor. Their minds were so darkened, their moral feelings so degraded, that the truth could gain no access, and made no impression. We were literally forced to adopt the method of regular teaching; and you see the result. A Christian nation is rising up around us. Another missionary from the same field, who had been twenty-five years on the ground, expressed his firm conviction that if God would continue to bless their labors for the next five and twenty years as he had hitherto done, the whole Tamul people would be as thoroughly Christianized as any nation in Europe.

Let it, however, be distinctly understood that we advocate no exclusive method of instruction. The business of the Church is to teach, and to teach in all the ways by which the truth of God can be conveyed to the understanding; but that work must be accomplished.

We have endeavored to show that teaching is the great duty of the Church, and how she ought to teach; the only other question is, What is she to teach? Is she to teach secular knowledge? The proper answer to this question undoubtedly is that the Church is bound to teach the Bible, and other things, only so far as they are necessary or important to the right understanding of the Bible. This exception, however, covers the whole field of human knowledge. The Bible is a wonderful book. It brings everything within its sweep. Its truths radiate in every direction, and become implicated with all other truth, so that no form of knowledge—nothing which serves to illustrate the nature of God, the constitution of the universe, or the powers of the human soul—fails to do homage and render service to the book of God. We cannot teach the



doctrines of creation and providence without teaching the true theory of the universe, and the proper office of the laws of nature; we cannot teach the laws of God without teaching moral philosophy; we cannot teach the doctrines of sin and regeneration without teaching the nature and faculties of the soul. Christianity, as the highest form of knowledge, comprehends all forms of truth.

Besides this, every false religion has underlying and sustaining it a false theory concerning God, concerning the world, and concerning the human soul. If you destroy these false theories, you destroy the religion. The Hindu religion cannot stand without the Hindu astronomy and cosmogony. Science undermines the pillars of heathenism, and frightens its votaries from its tottering walls. The native population of Calcutta is beginning to quake under the silent operation of Dr. Duff's school in that great city. They feel the ground trembling beneath their feet, and they are well aware if the truth in any form is taught, the whole system of error must soon crumble into dust. On the other hand, the true religion necessarily supposes a true theory concerning God, the universe, and the soul; so that you cannot teach the Bible without teaching what is commonly called human science. All knowledge comes from God, and leads to God. We must remember that ignorance is error, and not merely the absence of knowledge. The mind is never empty. If it has not right views, it has wrong views. If it has not right apprehensions concerning God, the universe, and itself, it has wrong ones. And all error is hostile to the truth. It is right, therefore, to pull up these noxious weeds, that the seeds of divine truth may the better take root and grow.

While, therefore, the Church is mindful that her vocation is to teach the Bible, she cannot forget that the Bible is the friend of all truth, and the enemy of all error. The Church is the light of the world. She has the right to subsidize all departments of knowledge, those principalities and powers, and force them to do homage to him to whom everything that has power must be made subservient. She has always acted under the consciousness that knowledge is her natural ally. She is the mother of all the universities of Europe. Harvard, Yale, Nassau Hall, and a numerous progeny besides, are all her children. She knows she is most effectually fulfilling her vocation, and honoring her divine Master, when she is most effectually bringing men to know him, from whom all knowledge flows and to whom all truth leads.

It is, Christian brethren, an infelicity incident to the prominent exhibition of any one truth, that other not less important truths are, for the moment, cast into the shade. Because we have insisted on the importance of communicating a knowledge of the truth, it may seem as though we forget that the truth is powerless without the demonstration of the Spirit. Must we ever undulate between these two cardinal points?

Because the Spirit alone can give the truth effect, must we do nothing? Or because the Spirit operates only with and by the truth, are we simply to teach, and forget our dependence upon God? Cannot we unite these two great doctrines in our faith and practice? Cannot we believe that it is the office of the Church to teach, and the prerogative of the Spirit to give that teaching effect? Cannot we be at once diligent and dependent, doing all things commanded, and yet relying exclusively on the power of God for success? In his commission to his Church, Christ says, "Go teach, and, lo, I am with you always, to give your teaching effect." Here, then, is at once our duty and our hope.