

**ADVANTAGES AND MEANS OF KEEPING
UP HABITS OF READING AMONG
THE CLERGY.**

A PAPER

**READ BEFORE THE CLERGY, ASSEMBLED IN LENNOXVILLE FOR
THE VISITATION OF THE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC, ON THE
6TH JULY, 1864.**

BY
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LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC.**

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This paper was written with too evident haste, and to be read, not printed. It is published at the individual request of most of the Clergy who heard it, as well as by the desire of the Lord Bishop. The proceeds of the sale will be given to the Diocesan Clerical Library, which it is decided to establish at Quebec.

Quebec, 1st August, 1864.

ADVANTAGES AND MEANS OF KEEPING UP HABITS OF READING AMONG THE CLERGY.

It is with unfeigned diffidence that I approach the consideration of the subject which has been assigned to me by his lordship the Bishop. My apology for presuming to speak upon such a theme to the reverend clergy must be that it has been so assigned to me, and not selected by myself. This, however, is a subject upon which I can fairly claim to speak with some confidence, because I have always been in some measure a reading man, while at the same time I have never been without that which is the only plausible excuse for not reading, viz., a large and toilsome pastoral charge. I have had experience both in country and in town, and am acquainted with the difficulties and hinderances of each. I can therefore say something from experience; and this is what I propose to do, to lay before my brethren some of the results of my own reading and observation, but chiefly of my own experience.

It is appointed me to treat of "the advantages and means of keeping up habits of reading among the clergy."

I. The advantages may be summed up in one sentence, that without systematic reading our ministry must prove a failure.

There are certain portions of our duty, it is true, which we may successfully perform by the aid of natural ability and prudence, joined to real earnestness of spirit—such as reading prayers, administering ordinances, and doing all the ordinary routine of our ministry; yes, and even keeping our flock together by diligent pastoral visiting, preventing them from breaking the fold, and all that is implied in the words *ruling the church*. We may do

more; we may warn and exhort, we may succeed in awakening the slumbering conscience, and bring men to begin in earnest to seek the way of salvation, and, thank God, to find it.

And how easy it is to fill up our whole time with these things, so as to have none left for what is far more important, I feel safe in appealing to the experience of every one of my brethren. When we have done our Sunday duty,—gone through our frequent week-day services, teachers' meetings, and Bible classes in town, or our mission services far from home in the country,—catechised our schools and confirmation classes,—performed our regulated amount of pastoral visiting,—attended our committee-meetings,—given that time to social intercourse which society not unreasonably exacts, and which our own mental and bodily health no less inexorably demands;—when we have done all this, (in addition to our *domestic* duties, which cannot be neglected,) how little time is left!—and how easy do we find it to persuade ourselves that none of that little can be spared for study,—that we are doing all we can, and can do no more,—that we are wholly absorbed in our Master's work—yes, and even more profitably (especially if we think that we are continually engaged in testifying the gospel of the grace of God from house to house) than we should be if we could find more time for even the highest studies!

But, after all, can we ever forget that, when we have done all this well and successfully, our work is only fairly begun; that ours is principally if not exclusively a pastoral ministry; that first and last we are pastors;—and that, as the word itself teaches, we are to be mainly employed in feeding those who are already the sheep and lambs of Christ our God?

Now all those functions of our ministry which I have enumerated, of whatever importance they may be, are not *feeding* the flock. To feed the flock is to provide spiritual nourishment suitable to the various and varying wants of its various members, such spiritual food as may enable them, if they take it in and assimilate it, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, and to go on from strength to strength. This will include, it is true, the removal of difficulties and stumbling blocks, subjective and objective, the continual laying open of the man to himself, and pursuing the deceitful heart, through all the manifold windings and

doublings of its deceitfulness, to conviction;—and the knowledge and power requisite for this is, of course, to be obtained more from prayer and personal holiness, from communion with Christ and with our own hearts, than from books. But the food of the soul is something beyond and besides even this. Feeding the flock consists, I apprehend, of two things,—*teaching the Faith, and expounding Scripture.*

1. The first duty, in my judgment, of a pastor is to teach his people the Catholic Faith,—to teach it as a system, so that they shall hold it as a system firmly and intelligently, and as the very heart and soul of their spiritual life. The Catholic Faith which we have to teach is a *Theology*—it is faith in a personal living God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in Their various relations to us. To this we are happily tied down by the construction of the Christian year. And do we not all feel more and more, as years roll on, the power and quickening energy which there is in such teaching—the vast superiority for touching and searching out the heart that there is in unfolding to men their relations to the living, present, personal God? And side by side with this, do we not feel more and more how inadequate we are to the setting forth of these deep things—the love of God the Father, the grace of God the Son, and the communion of God the Holy Ghost,—how poor and how low our apprehensions on these lofty themes have hitherto been, and how far below even our apprehensions, our expositions of them have fallen?

Theology, though an exact, is an exhaustless science, and one, moreover, in which (as the history of the human race has too mournfully proved) men are at every step liable to fall into error. And it is a science—(are we not liable sometimes to forget this?)—not for the amusement or gratification of the man of learned leisure, but for the communication to the hearts of all men of that knowledge in which standeth our eternal life. If our people are to grow spiritually, they must be fed with Christian knowledge, and led on in it from stage to stage. But how can this be done except by those who are themselves unceasingly students in this science—unless we acquaint ourselves and imbue our minds with the works of the great masters of theology, who have from age to age been raised up to enlighten the Church? The amount of

theological learning which we carry forth with us from College at our ordination is in most cases very small indeed. Our training there but puts into our hand the key of divine, as of human, knowledge. And it is a law of our intellectual and moral nature that knowledge, which is not being continually added to, fades from the mind more and more. Many and many a man,—yes, many and many an *earnest* man knows far less of theology when he has been twenty years in the ministry than he did when he first set out. Nowhere are the nice distinctions which are found in every science more abundant and of greater importance than in theology; and these distinctions do fade from the mind which is not kept familiar with the subject by continual study and meditation. Moreover every pastor is continually producing new sermons upon the great points of theology. If he is not a studious man, what can his sermons be, but poor and bare repetitions—no matter how earnestly and warmly they may be enunciated—of vague and pointless generalities upon his great theme? And what effect can this have upon his flock but either to keep them dwarfed and stationary in their spiritual life, or else to disgust and detach them from his ministry, either practically by their simply staying away from Church altogether, or else by their joining some of the more earnest-minded of the orthodox denominations around us?

2. The staple of our teaching, however, must always be *the exposition of Holy Scripture*.

The great masters of pastoral theology in all ages have urged upon the clergy the duty of introducing largely, very largely, the expository element into their preaching. That notwithstanding this, our sermons are so little expository in their character, and so largely text and subject sermons is a confession of the difficulty, if not of the exposition of Scripture in itself, at least of so expounding it as to make the result acceptable and edifying to the people.

Now, though there is no duty more difficult than that of a really deep, thorough and practical exposition of Holy Scripture—of such an exposition as shall not content itself with diluting the surface meaning of the text in a multitude of words, but shall seek to enter into the inner shrine of God's Holy Word, and draw out the secret, the deeper and better meaning, which only reveals

itself to the eye of faithful patient study and holy meditation—though, I say, there is no duty more difficult than this, yet we should be most ungrateful if we were not ready thankfully to acknowledge the abundant and most valuable helps to such an exposition with which we are furnished by the labours of the great students and expounders of the Bible of our own day. For the last half century the Word of God has been the object of attack to the infidel faction. Its genuineness, its authenticity, its inspiration, have been all called in question, and assailed with a prodigality of learning, of acuteness, and of power. But side by side with these assaults, nay, for the most part as their direct results in the necessary work of answering and removing difficulties and objections, expositions have been produced of nearly every book of Holy Scripture, especially of the New Testament, of a wonderful beauty and richness, and exhibiting a gift of very deep spiritual insight into the Holy Oracles.

It is true that most of the works to which I have reference are the productions of a foreign country, especially Germany, but the more valuable of them have been or are being translated into English; and besides we have in the best modern English commentaries and treatises, the results of the learned and pious labours of those biblical giants, if not their *ipsissima verba*.

Our own Church, however, has not been altogether sterile of works of Biblical exposition really excellent and yet really original. In the very first rank of these I place the books of that able, orthodox and in the best sense learned divine, who, to the joy and with the gratitude of the whole English Church, was lately made Archbishop of Dublin. Archbishop Trench's books are golden books, treasuries of profound learning, sound divinity—good old orthodox English divinity—and at the same time, so attractive from the charm of the style, that to read them is rather a delight than a labour. His Notes on the Miracles and Parables of our Lord leave nothing to be desired. His exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, from St. Augustine, has a peculiar value. His Lectures on the Epistles to the Seven Churches, though good, are, I think, inferior to the former works in excellence. But his two series of Synonyms of the Greek Testament which are in the best sense expositions of Holy Scripture, ought never to be off the table of

the Biblical student, but should be read and read again until they are thoroughly mastered. Trench's books have this additional value to us, that they are accessible, being all reprinted in the neighbouring States. These reprints are cheap and good, reproducing the originals with great correctness.

Next to Trench, I place Bishop Ellicott's Critical and Grammatical Commentaries on the shorter Pauline Epistles. They are intrinsically of a higher order than Trench's books, but are less valuable to the general reader because they are more difficult and require for their thorough mastering a higher scholarship than is in many cases found or reasonably to be expected among us. This, however, is to be said, that no student of the Greek Testament, however small his acquirements in point of scholarship may be, could fail to derive real profit from the study of Ellicott; and he who by a few months' or a whole year's study, shall have mastered Bishop Ellicott's five thin volumes, or even one of them, will have laid up for himself a store of sound critical and exegetical knowledge that will stand him in good stead to the end of his ministry. Ellicott's books take the first place for sound and advanced scholarship, being in the best sense and beyond all other English books critical and grammatical commentaries. But, besides this, so transparent is the honesty of purpose and fairness of Bishop Ellicott, so beautiful his gentleness in dealing with opponents, so deep his reverence for Holy Scripture, so impressively and yet unobtrusively does his own personal devoutness of spirit well up at every turn, and so thoroughly is he a true orthodox Church of England man, that I could scarcely wish anything better for a friend or for myself, than that our mind and heart should take their tone from his. Ellicott's books are being reprinted in the States*; but I should fear (unless I had the very highest guarantees as to the character of the editors) that they would suffer in the reproduction—they being books in which misprints are most difficult of detection, and most fatal to their value.

* The Commentary on the Galatians is published by D. F. Draper, N. Y., price \$1.50, extremely cheap at present rates of exchange. A friend tells me that it is carefully done.

Wordsworth's Greek Testament excels in patristic lore; it is also rich in valuable references (though in this respect it is even excelled by Ellicott) to the works of our great divines. I met the other day a passage in Dean Goodwin's beautiful and touching life of Bishop Mackenzie, which shows incidentally that he, even in the heart of the swamps of Africa, and amid circumstances which occupied his whole time, was still a reading man, and also bears witness to his value for some of the works of which I have spoken. He is describing his hut at Magomero: "Above all is a shelf made by thrusting the ends of bamboos through the roof at both ends, on which are my Bible, Christian Year, Thomas A. Kempis, Wordsworth's New Testament, Trench, and one or two others."

If to Trench, Ellicott, and Wordsworth, we add the valuable and learned commentary of Dr. Pusey on the Minor Prophets, we shall have a series of books, which are not only of the highest possible value in themselves, but also, as works of *original merit*, a real credit to the English Church.

I have not included Alford in the above list, because, though I am deeply sensible of the value of his Greek Testament, it is not, in my judgment, in the same sense an original work as the others, but much more a compilation from German sources—nor is it by any means worthy of being ranked with them as a true and honest representation of the mind of the Church of England upon the great controversies of the day. At the same time, Dean Alford is unquestionably an orthodox Christian, and not one of the sceptical school; he holds the catholic faith, and expounds and defends it firmly and manfully. And with respect to the inspiration of Holy Scripture, his view of which is low and seriously defective, I have noticed with the deepest thankfulness the greatly improved tone of his later volumes. Certainly, for myself, if I could have one book only on the New Testament, as the *critical* value of Wordsworth is next to nothing, and as Bishop Ellicott's labours have extended as yet to so small a portion of the New Testament, I should have no hesitation in choosing Alford.

The voluminous commentaries of Isaac Williams are of a different class, devotional rather than critical, but most valuable and always suggestive; only frequently embarrassing one with

the richness of their learning, and perhaps sometimes carrying out the mystical interpretation of Scripture to unwarrantable lengths.

But, besides these works of English divines, most of which are largely indebted for their excellence to the learning, scholarship and piety of Germany, we have direct access by means of translations, to most of the best expository works of the orthodox German divines, to whom Christendom owes the deepest obligations, both as defenders and as expounders of Holy Scripture.

I am now speaking of modern books, but I must first speak a word about a book which is not modern.

To Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament, though now more than a century old (and certainly not to be read in a translation but in the original Latin), is to be assigned the very first place among all the commentaries on the New Testament that ever were written. There is not a sentence in this truly *aurum opus* that does not throw light upon the sacred page.

The terseness and brevity which Bengel attained are wonderful, especially when contrasted with the enormous and most wearisome length of the modern German writers. This terrible endlessness is a serious drawback not only to one's comfort, but also to the advantage one derives from these books. Nevertheless, I know of no books in point of spiritual insight into the inner meaning of Scripture at all to compare with Stier's Words of the Lord Jesus, and Olshausen's commentaries on the New Testament.* And after all it is only fair to say that this lengthiness is not mere wordiness, but arises from the writer's earnest desire fully to develop the meaning and emphasis of every word of Holy Scripture. I was invited some time ago, in conjunction with a friend, to prepare for the press a condensed edition of Stier's Words of the Lord Jesus (which is now in 8 vols. 8vo.), with a view to make it more useful to the clergy in general, as well as within their reach; and on reading over a portion with this view, I could with difficulty find anything that could be left out without loss; every word seemed of value.

* Stier, however, I place much above Olshausen.

Very different this from most of our English commentaries, such as Scott, Henry, Patrick, D'Oyly and Mant, &c., (and after all the praise bestowed on it, Horne on the Psalms is little better,) where you are wearied to death with pious meditations upon obvious truths, all the real difficulties being conveniently passed over in silence, so that one has no remedy but to cast them all to the moles and to the bats in utter disgust and vexation. I really believe that we needed the late inundation of anti-scriptural scepticism to awaken us from our most anti-scriptural laziness and apathy as to anything like earnestness and reality in the critical study of Holy Scripture. That the state of New Testament exegesis (especially when such a book as Bengel was for a century in the hands of English divines) should have remained what it was down to a few years ago, is an indelible disgrace to the English church.

How differently furnished for the work of expounding the New Testament is a young clergyman now with such books as the above in his hands, together with such valuable and thoughtful works as Ellicott's* and Andrews'†, and now (a work deeper and more valuable than either, to which indeed both are deeply indebted) Lange's *Life of the Lord Jesus*, Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul* (in reading which one really is admitted into a new world of knowledge), and Dr. Mill's *Christian Advocate's* publications! These works are not only valuable, but attractive and interesting, so that when once you get into them you cannot rest satisfied without going through them.

When I speak of the study of the New Testament with a view to its exposition, I mean, of course, the original text. The books which I have been speaking of, would be, most of them, of little use except to one familiar with the Greek original. Familiar, I say, not merely slightly acquainted, but familiar. And here lies

* *Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ*, by C. J. Ellicott, D.D., Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Boston, Gould & Lincoln, 1862. Price \$1.00.

† *The Life of our Lord upon the Earth, in its historical, chronological and geographical relations*, by Rev. Saul J. Andrews. London, Strahan & Co. This is a reprint of the original American Edition. Price, about \$1.

the value of that habit, so much recommended but so little I fear practised, of reading through a chapter of the Greek Testament every morning and evening as a devotional exercise. I remember that after I began to do so, many long years ago, I thought it very dull and unprofitable work. However, I persevered, and found in time the fruits of it in the familiarity it gave me with the text, and the ease and pleasure with which I was able to use the great works I have been speaking of, when I obtained access to them.

I wish I could convey to the minds of my younger brethren my own deep sense of the paramount importance of a familiar acquaintance with the original text of Holy Scripture, especially of the New Testament. The late Professor Blunt, in one of his many invaluable works, his *Duties of the Parish Priest* (a book, by the way, which surely ought to be a text book in all our Theological Colleges,) shows, by a long and interesting induction of passages from the New Testament, how liable a clergyman is to slip at every step, if he expounds from the English version, and does not keep the Greek before him; and how such an one, even if he on the whole catch the right meaning, loses many of the beauties and finer touches. I can imagine nothing more impressive and convincing than Professor Blunt's argument on this subject. I had thought of introducing here a few instances of my own collection as illustrative of the great advantage the student who is familiar with the Greek possesses over him who only studies the English version, but the limits of this paper oblige me reluctantly to omit them. I must content myself with referring to one passage only, St. John's beautiful and affecting account of the interview between the risen Lord and his Apostles at the sea of Galilee, in which He commits His lambs and sheep to Peter to be fed. I think there is no passage of the New Testament which has suffered such loss in the translation as this. In the original there are two words, *αγαπην* and *φιλειν*, intended to convey quite distinct ideas, and intentionally put in contrast, which are in the English rendered by the same word *love*; two more, *βοσκειν* and *ποιμαινεν*, quite as distinct rendered by the one word *feed*; and yet two more *ειδεναι* and *γνωσκειν* rendered by the one word *know*. The instructive and beautiful play of feeling between the Lord and Peter, as conveyed by the variations of these words in the original, is quite lost in our

version. Let any one but read Trench's brief exposition of the passage in his *Synonyms*, and the still deeper and better exposition of Stier, in his *Words of the Lord Jesus*, and then compare Scott or Henry, and he will need no more argument on the subject.

One more book I must mention, which ought to be in the hands of every student of the Greek Testament, and which, perhaps more than any other, is a monument of the enormous advance which has been made in the right criticism and exegesis of the Sacred Text, I mean *Winer's Grammar of the New Testament*. This invaluable work, first published in Germany in 1822, and gradually improved through six editions to 1855, ushered in a new era in Biblical criticism, and gave a deathblow to the extravagant licence which had previously prevailed. For several centuries before Winer the New Testament diction was supposed by critics to be almost made up of anomalies, solecisms, pleonasms, and other grammatical improprieties. Difficulties were explained by gravely laying down that *eis* was put for *en*, *o* for *eis*, *but* for *then*, the present for the future, a comparative for a positive, and so on. This system, which the great Hermann rightly characterised as so many blasphemies, has now for ever passed away. Winer's Grammar was translated into English in 1859*.

These, then, are some of the helps to the exposition of the New Testament, which the learned and pious labours of modern scholars have given us. In the study of the Hebrew Scriptures we have not, to any great extent, the same sort of guidance. But may we not reasonably indulge the hope that Dr. Colenso's miserable assault upon the Books of Moses will have the effect of soon placing within our reach a series of works of equal value upon the books of the Old Testament? I am persuaded that it will be so; for it must be evident to any one who has carefully followed the course of the Colenso controversy, that already there are a hundred earnest students of the Hebrew Scriptures for every one there was before.

Now, what is the conclusion of the whole matter? Why surely it is this? If the chief part of our pastoral work consists in expounding the Scriptures to our flocks, and if all these helps

* Published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. Price, about \$3.00.

to a deeper and better knowledge and exposition of those Scriptures are within our reach, how shall we stand excused if we do not avail ourselves of them? What censure of us can be too severe if we wilfully remain incapable of expounding the Holy Oracles with a growing power and insight, so that our people shall feel and share in the growth which is in us,—share in it directly, and also by being themselves attracted to drink more and more deeply of that living fountain from which they see us to draw both grace and life?

And this, I am deeply persuaded, is the true solution of difficulties about the inspiration of the Scriptures so far as they assail the mass of the Christian people. For them, those difficulties must be solved, not by argument, much less by strong and fierce assertions without argument, but by the self-evidencing nature of the Holy Oracles themselves—by our so reading and expounding them to the people as to bring home to their hearts the conviction that they are the voice, the words of the living God, quick and powerful, entering into them, searching them, and finding them.* Theories of inspiration are of no use; but if the Bible is the word of God, then, if it be handled, studied, meditated, digested by us with reverence and diligence, it will infallibly manifest in our hands and vindicate its own divinity.

And this leads me to say, in passing, that if habits of reading are so necessary for the right discharge of our ministry in itself, much more are they necessary for the times in which we live. We live in a reading age; we live also in a sceptical age. We live in an age when education is widely, almost universally diffused, when all have at least that dangerous thing, a little knowledge. The controversies of the day are not now confined to a small circle of learned writers who communicate with one another in the learned language, which is a dead letter to the multitude; they are read of, and inquired into by all, by mechanics and tradesmen, by the working as well as the wealthy classes. To these classes indeed the controversialists of the day, and especially the sceptics address themselves, appealing to them as judges. No one who has paid any considerable attention to the *Essays* and

* As Coleridge speaks.

Reviews controversy, and to the Colenso controversy, can have helped noticing this alarming feature of modern scepticism. Dr. Colenso writes his books in a good, vigorous, racy style, and appeals to the common sense and love of fair play of his countrymen. If on coming to us with their difficulties, or if without coming to us openly on the subject by their ordinary intercourse with us, or from the style of our pulpit addresses, the more intelligent of our people perceive that we really have neither read nor thought upon these subjects at all—subjects which are to them of awful and tremendous importance—what must the effect be? They may not treat us with contempt, but there cannot be a doubt what they will feel. If we wish to continue the spiritual guides of the people, we must take the trouble to fit ourselves to deserve their confidence. With that view we must still keep ourselves intellectually in advance of them, at least in all things that concern our office, and to that end it is absolutely indispensable that we should be earnest and diligent students.

If. Such, then, are the advantages; such rather is the necessity of our being reading men. In speaking further of the *means* of keeping up habits of reading, I shall arrange what I have to say under three heads, with reference to the difficulties and drawbacks which we all feel in our attempts to discharge this duty.

The difficulties may all be reduced to these three, want of time, want of books, and want of stimulus and encouragement in the absence of literary society.

1. The first and the most serious hinderance is *want of time*. Is it not rare to find a clergyman who will not tell you, "I can find little or no time for reading!" Now I think that the answer which we should all be prepared with, against ourselves, when we are tempted to quiet our conscience with such an excuse, is this, that if to read is indispensable to the successful discharge of our ministry, then we must make time for it. We must, at all costs, and remembering the great account we shall have to give at the last day, exercise great self-denial that we may be true and faithful pastors. Let our occupations be however important and engrossing, we must do less in any other branch or all other branches of our duty, that we may do something in this.

But, after all, there is no reading man who does not know how

much may be done by gathering up the fragments of time and turning them to good account. If you have a book in hand that you are interested in, it is wonderful how rapidly you will get through it by taking it up at little odd spare moments. Why should not the same hold good of the critical study of the Greek Testament? Adopting for our motto *Nulla dies sine linea*, if we have before us Alford, or Ellicott, or Wordsworth, and read on patiently verse by verse, day after day, we shall, on looking back, soon be astonished at the progress we have made.

It is a well known fact that a very large proportion of the most eminent and successful literary men of our own day and of past ages have been men whose work in life, which absorbed the whole of their working time, lay in quite other walks. Grote, the author of by far the best history of Greece, is a London merchant. Lord Brougham, Sir George C. Lewis, and Mr. Gladstone may be mentioned as finding time in the midst of their great and engrossing public duties for learned researches and successful authorship; and the list might be indefinitely extended.

And if we ask, how did these men accomplish such wonderful results, the answer is, *first*, by being possessed with a *real love* for literary pursuits, and *secondly*, by *living by rule and system*, without which nothing great or good is ever accomplished in any walk in life. We, surely, ought to love our sacred studies; and we, above all Christians, ought to live by rule, and by rule ought a portion of our time to be rigidly fenced off for reading, jealously guarded and kept sacred against all intrusion of other, however important, occupations.

2. Another difficulty which we have to contend with is, *the want of books*. Many of the books which I have spoken of above are expensive—some of the best of them—Alford, Ellicott, and Wordsworth—to be had only in English editions. Stier and Olshausen have appeared in American editions, both of which (I am told, for I have not seen them,) are decidedly superior in point both of style and of accuracy of translation to the English editions. Of Conybeare and Howson's invaluable Life of St. Paul there is an American edition. Bengel must be got from home, and costs about 20s. The S. P. C. K. helps us to a very good critical edition of the Greek Testament, suitable for constant use, I mean

the Cambridge or Scrivener's Greek Testament, which may be had in this country for about 5s.*

The want of books among the clergy in this neighbourhood is, I am aware, in a great measure supplied by the liberality of the authorities of Bishop's College. That the clergy are permitted not only to have free access to the College Library, but even to borrow books from it, under certain very reasonable restrictions, is a privilege for which they can never be sufficiently grateful. Unfortunately it is of little or no use to those of us who live at a distance.

I have long thought that the clergy ought to take measures for forming theological libraries at various points where they can have easy and free access to them at all times. Dr. Bray's Associates in London would in all cases give the nucleus of such a library, and would, also, I am persuaded, on application send out such books as should be selected by the clergy applying for them. I think also that Dean Alford, Canon Wordsworth, Bishop Ellicott, Archbishop Trench, the Rev. Isaac Williams (who now is nearly related to us all) and others, would readily, if the Bishop would kindly consent to apply to them on our behalf, give one or more sets of their respective works to be placed in those libraries for the use of the clergy. Would it not be worth while to try?

Of these libraries there ought to be, I think, one in Lennoxville, one in Gaspé, one in Megantic, and one in Quebec. To these might be added, if the clergy would contribute each a small annual subscription, one or more of the most valuable new works of Biblical Criticism, English Divinity, or Church History, issuing year by year from the English Press. I do trust also that the new commentary on the Bible, projected by the Speaker of the House of Commons, and now preparing under the editorship of Dean Cook, around which cluster so many bright hopes, and which cannot fail to be very far superior to anything of the sort

* It may perhaps be well to remark that books may be always bought in England very much cheaper than the publishing prices. There is perhaps no clergyman who does not spend something upon books. Would it not be well, instead of picking up a book here and there because it is cheap, that two or three neighbouring clergy should combine from time to time and send home for a few really good books?

as yet in the English language, will be within the reach of all our clergy. Might not a special effort be made to obtain copies of it for our clerical libraries, as suggested above? We in Quebec have had for some five years the privilege of very free access to the truly noble library of our Parliament, even the theological department of which is of great excellence, and is especially rich in modern works of Theology and Church History. As we are about to lose this privilege, there is the more necessity for us to make an earnest effort to help ourselves.

I would submit for the consideration of my brethren whether, if we decide upon attempting to form these libraries, we should not make them to consist almost exclusively of modern books—books which shall reflect the mind of the Church of our own day and put us in communion with the thoughts and feelings of our brethren at the Church's centre at home. In some departments of divinity, it is true and must always remain true that the old is better. But there is a freshness and crispness, a certain flavour, as it were—a sympathy with the times and the age—an earnestness and enthusiasm about modern books, a power to touch the heart, and arouse it to present action, which are not reasonably to be looked for in the books of ages gone by. When I read such charming and admirable books as Harvey Goodwin's *Life of Bishop Mackenzie*; or books so heart-searching and arousing as the Bishop of Oxford's addresses, or books of Divinity so solid and thoroughly satisfactory as Moberly on the Great Forty Days, Freeman's *Principles of Divine Service*, Lee on Inspiration, or *Aids to Faith*; or such thoughtful and suggestive books as Mansel's *Bampton Lectures*, Bishop Thompson on the Atonement, or Bishop Ellicott's *Destiny of the Creature*; it almost breaks my heart to think that so many of my brethren are by the unavoidable misfortune of distance from the great centres of intelligence and literature—but most by the *res angustæ domi*, shut out from the great pleasure and the greater profit—profit not only to themselves, but also to the souls of their people—of ever seeing them. I am persuaded, however, that by a little management much improvement in this respect could be effected. Might not, for example, a little branch of the Bray's Associates be formed in Quebec, and the generous and large-hearted among our laity be appealed to, to help

in forming a central fund for the purchase of books to be distributed at various points for the use of the clergy ?

There is one department of religious literature, from which our poverty absolutely excludes most of us, to our serious loss,—I mean the *periodical* literature of our Church at home.

There are some English periodicals, claiming to represent the mind of the Church, from which we are happy in being, by our distance from England, delivered—newspapers, and magazines respecting which one is lost in wonder that any persons could be found silly enough to write their contents, and still more that others could be found to buy and read them. Anything more puerile than the writings of the extreme High Church (or *Catholic*, as they delight to call themselves) school in England, as represented by their newspapers, I cannot imagine.

There are other periodicals, however, which are an honour to our Church, and would prove a help in their study, and a solid means of improvement to the best men among us, as well as an unerring source of refreshment and delight. I refer particularly to the *London Guardian*, the *Colonial Church Chronicle*, and the *Christian Remembrancer*. I can imagine nothing more likely to form and keep up a man's taste for really good reading, to stir him up to read, and to help him in his selection of books, than these three admirable periodicals—all of them sound, and orthodox, moderate in their churchmanship, high-toned in their religious sentiment, and conducted with most marked ability. Ought we not to make an earnest effort to avail ourselves of this means of improvement ?

3. There is one more very serious discouragement to reading, and with the consideration of it I will conclude this already too lengthy paper—I mean, the want, in most of our missions, of literary society. There can be no doubt that mixing continually with those who are beneath us in point of refinement, education and literary taste, has a tendency to drag a man down ; while, on the other hand, the knowledge that he has to meet socially with men his equals or superiors in intellect and literary attainment, and to speak to them as their pastor, upon the most weighty of all subjects, must stimulate a man to study and to care and diligence in the preparation of his sermons. We must, however, take things as they are and make the best of them. We

cannot create in a day a society that does not exist, but it is our duty to help to form it; therefore we must look to ourselves that we do not gravitate to a lower level by the state of society that does exist. There is one safeguard against this degrading tendency, which I would suggest for the consideration of my brethren, and I believe it would prove more effectual than any other. It is the establishment of stated clerical meetings for *conference*, for the discussion of questions of present interest, such as would lead us to read by way of preparation for the discussion, and more particularly for the study, or discussion of Holy Scripture. Such meetings of the clergy are frequent in England under the name of Clerical Associations; and in the neighbouring States they are becoming quite an institution under the title of *Convocations*. We have a Clerical Association in Quebec, under the presidency of the Bishop, which does something, and which is about to be reorganized with a view to monthly instead of quarterly meetings. From those meetings we always retire refreshed, and with the feeling that we have been drawn by such intercourse closer to one another. But in the country they are even more needed than in the town. And if there could be connected with them a certain (so to call it) *reviewing* of certain works, of one book at each meeting, which should be read by way of preparation by all the members in the interval before the meeting, the effect could not fail to be good. In any case the study and discussion of a passage of Holy Scripture at such meetings must be attended with the best and happiest results.

One thing, let me say in conclusion, I have always found a great help in my own studies—both Biblical and general—and that is, when I was able to read with a special object in view, and for the purpose of bringing the results of my reading immediately to bear—of *reproducing* at once what I should acquire. It is wonderful how reading in this way sharpens the intellect, and gives quickness to the eye, and strength and order to the memory. Sit down to Grote's History of Greece, for example, as a matter of duty, and you may read page after page, or chapter after chapter, and your mind retain nothing at all—being pre-occupied by more interesting thoughts. But design a popular lecture for your people upon some point of Grecian History, the History of Alexander the

Great—*e. g.*, in its bearing on the prophecies of Daniel—or the gradual spread of the Greek language and literature, as a preparation for the spread of Christianity, and you will note and remember what you read without an effort. Even in the preparation for one's ordinary sermons, how much reading may be brought to bear! We may choose a connected set of subjects, and read with a view to the writing of the sermons. Take the Creed, and prepare a sermon on the *Descensus ad inferos*, and how easy will it be to read (with a view to the sermon,) and to master all that we can find in our books on the subject! Sermons so prepared for, and written from a mind full after such reading, will be listened to by our people with no dull or listless ears. Events, also, are continually occurring in the contemporaneous history of the Church which give a peculiar zest and interest to certain classes of subjects. Would it not be well to take advantage of those seasons, and read up the subjects under discussion? As, for example, the literature of the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, and of the doctrines of the Atonement and of Eternal Punishment, how comparatively easy is it to go into these questions thoroughly, and master them now! At such seasons, too, we may, not only without impropriety, but generally with great benefit to our people, bring those subjects before them, and thus make our knowledge of them accurate and exact. Nearly all my study of Theology, Church History, Controversy and Holy Scripture, has been with a view to immediate reproduction in Sermons, Lectures or Bible Classes. This sort of study—when you study, I mean, with a view to reproduction in writing—has the double advantage of making you both a *full* man and an *exact* man. Ordinary reading, simply with a view to knowing a subject, gives a man a sort of fulness of knowledge, but it is an unhealthy fulness—a fulness without exactness or order—for no man knows a subject that he cannot reproduce in writing. I commend this mode of reading to the consideration of my brethren, with the utmost confidence of its many solid advantages, and of the certainty of its success.

In concluding, let me express the hope that I shall not be misunderstood, as if I made the whole of our ministry to consist in reading. No: however important, it is not the whole. There is even a danger—though among us I think it is slight—of our being

so absorbed in study as to neglect the ministry. There is a further danger attending earnest study, the danger of forgetting that religion is not a matter of the intellect; that spiritual things are not intellectually but spiritually discerned; that it is our spirit not our intellect which holds communion with God. But these dangers must not keep us back from study and the cultivation of our minds. We live in very awful times, when, in the words of the greatest living prelate, we seem to see "the first stealing over the sky of the lurid lights which shall be shed profusely around the great antichrist." The sudden and startling development of the existence of an infidel faction within the bosom of our own church is surely such a sign. The battle cry of these miserable men is, the supremacy of reason over faith, and, human intellect the measure of all truth. On their own ground we must meet them; and, while we deny their position, be nevertheless prepared to show the entire accordance between faith and reason, and that Divine truth though above, is in no instance contradictory to, the laws of the human mind. If, relying upon the divinity of our holy religion, and the certainty of God's promises to the Church—that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her—we sit calmly down to wait the issue, instead of boldly and manfully joining battle with our foes, as if all depended on ourselves, what will the result be? The result will be that we shall be left behind in the awful onward march of the intellect and progress of the age; and the ark of God, which is upon our shoulders, will, for a time, be left behind with us. The truth has often been assailed, and has, it is true, always come forth victorious from the contest. But how? By reason of the earnest efforts, the successful efforts, of the living members of the Church, vindicating her position by their writings, their labours, and their blood. One, alas! not now of us, said, and said truly, "Our Church could do anything, humanly speaking, if it knew its own strength, *and if its members were at peace with each other!*" This inestimable advantage, we, in this Diocese, thank God, possess; we are, as nearly, I believe, as we can expect to see it on earth, "a city at unity with itself." If, with this vast advantage, we, the clergy, show ourselves worthy of our position—by our zeal, our love for the souls of men, our devotion to our ministry, our spiritual-mindedness, our learning, our thoughtful-

ness, our mental vigour; if we take care not to be behind the progress and intellectual activity of the age, but to keep still in front of it as leaders in the work, each in his own sphere and place, what, indeed, may we not hope, under God, to see the Church accomplish? We should *see* her accomplishing her holy mission, and acknowledged by all, even her enemies, to be “the light of the world, and the salt of the earth.”