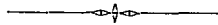


scholarship by running counter to the prevailing fashion of the day. There must also, in all fairness, be added the fascination of attempting to solve an insoluble problem, which is akin to the pleasure with which we attempt to guess a riddle or to read a communication in cypher. But scholastic fashions must ultimately give way to the verdict of the public at large. When the question is fairly laid before them, the Christian people in this country will decide it according to the evidence. "Securus judicat orbis terrarum," not on the *ipse dixit* of any Pope or other infallible authority, but by the exercise of enlightened reason on the facts which are brought to our notice. The proceeding may be a long and difficult one. Its difficulty is greatly enhanced by the absence of contemporary literature and history. But if we are to be guided by the principles on which questions concerning the history or literature of other countries have been decided, and not by ingenious guesses and bold hypotheses, we shall end pretty much as we began. We may recognise the presence of composite elements in the historic and prophetic books. We may admit that there may be reasonable doubts as to the precise period at which they were compiled. But we shall be convinced of the substantial accuracy of the traditional view of Jewish literature and Jewish institutions.

J. J. LIAS.



ART. II.—LENGTHENING THE CORDS AND STRENGTHENING THE STAKES.

THE following Address was lately delivered to the Liverpool clergy, and also to the clergy of the Rural Deanery of Huddersfield:

For the sake of clearness of outline, and to help my mind and yours, I will found my remarks on Is. liv. 2 :

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."

I have no need in this assembly to show how the words which I have just read are connected with the liii. of Isaiah. They foretell the results of Messiah's atoning death. The pre-eminence of the Hebrew Church as the mother church of Christendom is the leading thought. The image of the enlargement of a tent to receive the great increase of children is appropriate because the tabernacle or "tent of witness" was the symbol of the Jewish Church. The more the tent is enlarged, and the more widely her curtains are spread, the more needful is it to lengthen the cords; and the more canvas is exposed to the wind, the more necessary is it to strengthen the tent-pegs or stakes. The Church of Christ must not merely "preach the Gospel to every creature," and so lengthen her cords, but she must build up her converts in the faith, "teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded"; in other words, she must strengthen her stakes.

My subject is *steadfastness* and then *extension*. We have the same connection of thought in that pair of parables which ought never to be separated—the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Entrusted Talents. The connection between secret faith in the heart and the life of active obedience—life *in* Christ and life *for* Christ. I shall consider the subject in two aspects :

I. As to our individual inner life.

II. As to our special position as ministers of Christ.

I. To “strengthen the stakes”—to drive in the tent-pegs is a striking picture of the deepening and establishing of the inner life, and the lengthening the cords is a no less striking image of the gradual extension of our area of usefulness in the Church of God and of the world. As I shall dwell almost entirely on the first figure, let me remind you that the two must go together. The proportion must be complete. If you lengthen your cords, but do not strengthen your stakes, your tent will be liable to be swept away by the blast of temptation and trial. On the other hand, it is in vain to deepen your stakes unless you lengthen your cords, for the end of all religion is consecration to God and His service, to be used for His honour and glory.

There is one more point which must be settled before we proceed. That is the underground upon which we are building. If the foundation be sand, we drive in our tent-pegs in vain. They will not hold. Years ago I had an experience in the Lebanon. A sirocco was expected. My tent was pitched on rocky ground. I drove in my pegs to the hilt in narrow crevices in the rocks. The hurricane came in all its violence. My tent was shaken, but it stood. Let us ask ourselves once again the old, old question, Am I building upon the rock? Am I vitally united to Christ by faith? Is the living Christ the author of my salvation, the object of my faith, the inspiration of my love, the source of my power? If not—if some blast of temptation should assail me—if I should grievously fall, then should I have to cry in the words of the prophet, “My tent is destroyed, and all my tent-pegs are plucked up; my children are gone away from me and are not, and there is none to spread out my tent any more, or to set up my tent curtains” (Jer. x. 20).

Let me mention two stakes which need to be strengthened.

First, we must rivet our souls more firmly on the Word of God. We are pledged to this by our ordination vows. If we are to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” we must set apart a time each day for the devotional reading of the Word of God, with a view to the sustentation of our inner life, entirely distinct from sermon preparation. One great temptation is to read the Bible with a view to our public ministry only. “Our own souls must be bathed in these living streams if we would keep them apt and ready for heavenly visitations.”¹ There is one aspect of this “inquiring and searching diligently” to which I would call your attention. There are three *πληροφορίας* in the New Testament—the “full assurance of faith,” the “full assurance of hope,” and the “full assurance of the understanding.” We long and pray for the “full assurance of faith”—to be able to say with St. Paul, “I know whom I have believed”; with St. John, “Now are we the sons of God.” The “full assurance of hope” raises our heads above the billows in many a storm. But we shall certainly lose the one and the other unless the streams of our soul are fed by the “full assurance of the understanding.” Here is our danger amid the incessant activities of clerical life. On the day of Pentecost there was a mighty influence on the emotions. We see the glow, the fervour, the joy of the infant church. But trace it to its source. The fervour of emotion had its

¹ Bishop Wilberforce's Ordination Addresses, p. 188.

origin in a sudden access of intellectual light. The Collect for Whit-Sunday seizes the central idea of the event. God at that time not only stirred but *taught* the hearts of His faithful people, and sent to them not only the warmth, but "the *light* of His Holy Spirit." Again, in the Litany we pray God to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of "His Word." We are face to face with great controversies. One thing is certain. If we are to have the "full assurance of the understanding" we must study the word of Revelation with a deeper humility. Bacon, in the Preface to his "Natural and Experimental History," says: "Humility as in the sight of God is the key which unlocks the truth of all natural science." The Bible carries with it its own credentials. The highest kind of evidence is that which truth bears to itself. Let us read the Word with fervent prayer for the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Once let us lose the full assurance of the understanding and our faith becomes dim, and when we ascend the Pisgah height of hope, as in days of old, we find ourselves enshrouded in mist and gloom. It is only by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, under the "heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost," that we can be alone with God and see in open vision the vastness of all His loving purposes. In the words of the late Bishop Wilberforce: "They who haunt these mighty tides of Divine Revelation 'see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.'" With my whole heart I would warn myself and you, my Reverend Brethren, against one danger of Bible criticism. Do not mistake me. I am not referring to such questions as the periods and authors of the several books of the Bible, though even here I would suggest caution. As regards the more advanced form of Bible criticism, I, for one . . . absolutely *refuse to receive* what are called "results" and "conclusions." I wait for the time of "summing up," and that has not yet come. Beaten back in the field of the New Testament, the assailants of the truth of Holy Scripture in their destructive criticism have betaken themselves to the Old Testament. I would remind you that philologists themselves allow that there are few provinces in mental activity in which errors more easily occur than in that of literary criticism. A well-known German professor reminds us that Schleiermacher was versed as few men ever have been in the writings of Plato, and yet he erroneously rejected many of Plato's discourses. I refer now to a habit which is easily superinduced by such studies as these—of approaching the Bible in a critical, even in a semi-rationalistic, spirit; of entering the sanctuary with covered feet; and of forgetting that one of the great designs of the Word of God is that it should itself be the *κριτικός*, the "*discerner* of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The second "stake" of which I would speak is prayer. Do we not all feel amid the endless claims upon our time that there is special danger of minimizing our seasons of private devotion? The very distraction of our work demands and necessitates increased carefulness in the habit of prayer. I have often sought refuge from the din and noise of the Strand in the repose and stillness of the Temple Gardens. The very act of prayer is soothing to the mind apart from the blessing we look for in return, just as we are refreshed in the darkness by the fragrance of the garden, even though we cannot see to cull the flowers. We may say of prayer what one of the old poets has sung in praise of country life:

There is no man but may make his Paradise.
 And it is nothing but his love and dotage
 Upon the world's foul joys that keeps him out on't;
 For he that lives retired in mind and spirit
 Is still in Paradise.

St. Paul constantly realized this. He tells us that one of the five con-

ditions upon which the peace of God is to be maintained in the soul amid the distractions of life is this: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. So the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall fortify your hearts and minds."

But not only for repose but for safety's sake we must pray. If our souls are not strengthened by prayer we shall certainly fall a prey to temptation. We marvel that some mighty tree is brokeu by the blast, until we discover the inner decay. The great Origen, under fear of death, denied his Lord. The heathen were exultant. They did not know that Origen that morning had left his chamber without his wonted prayer. His last biographer denies the recantation, but his sermon in Jerusalem on Ps. l. 16, 17, seems to authenticate the fact. Even if it be not true, the instinctive feeling that it is likely is a proof of our consciousness that all our inconsistencies, every yielding to temptation, each fall, secret it may be, is to be traced up to the neglect of habitual communion with God. Let the old question come back with all its ancient force: "Will you be diligent in prayer?" For our own soul's sake, for our ministry's sake, we must be more and more men of prayer. All mighty works for God are done by His saints upon their knees. The man of prayer is the man of power in the Church of God.

Time forbids me to mention other means of establishing the inner life. I can only indicate one mode of lengthening the cords; that is, by "making ourselves wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ." How often our inconsistencies have been stumbling-blocks to souls that have listened to our every word and weighed our every action! Without consistency of life our sermons are to the hearers but professional declarations. The most mighty apology for Christianity has ever been the lives of God's saints. It is not to the logic of schoolmen, but to the self-denial and love and purity and zeal and faithfulness of the disciples of Jesus, that Christianity to-day mainly owes her dominion over human hearts. Even Seneca, a heathen, could say: "Longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla." Aristotle in his "Rhetoric" says that "your power of persuasion will depend upon the opinion your hearers entertain of you." When George Herbert was inducted to his living he determined by God's help "to live well, because the virtuous life of a clergyman is the most powerful eloquence to persuade all that see it to reverence and love, and at least to desire to live like him. And this I will do, because we live in an age that hath more need of good examples than of precepts. And I beseech God that my humble and charitable life may so win upon others as to bring glory to my Jesus, whom I have this day taken to be my Master and Governor." St. Francis d'Assisi was tinged with superstition, but he was a burning and a shining light. The secret of his power as a preacher lay in the holiness of his life. He was a visible image of love to God and love to man; to quote the words of the Bishop of Durham, "He was, if I may so speak, a living imitatio Christi." Our influence in life depends upon grace rather than upon gifts. If we do but lengthen our cords little by little, it is astonishing how far one heart and one life may stretch at length. "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine."

II. I must now look at a wider field. The tent, or tabernacle, is an emblem of the Church; and here we will use the command, "Spare not; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes," in a more Catholic sense. Never since apostolic days has a Church more lengthened her cords than the Church of England in recent times. For years her history has been one of extension at home and abroad. I have no need to prove this statement. But is she strengthening her stakes? Is she building up

her people in their most holy faith? Do we not all feel the danger of time so taken up with making hurdles for our folds that we have little time for that most important of all work—the work to which we have been called—that of feeding the sheep? Forgive me if I speak out of the abundance of my heart. We are not producing the highest type of Christian life in the present day. Our sermons are losing their influence and their power. They lack instruction. “Our people are not taught,” says Dean Goulburn, “and brought on gradually towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” St. Paul, when writing to Timothy, says, “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” The tendency of preachers to-day is to rely too exclusively on the *παρακλησις*, and to ignore the *διδασκαλία*. Are we surprised that so many are blown about by every wind of doctrine? “The words of the wise are as goads,” says Solomon, “and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd.” As you know, the word “by” is not in the Hebrew. It matters not whether Solomon means that the words which are given from the one Shepherd are “masters of assemblies”—that is, that they rule and guide the audience which listens to them—or that the “masters of assemblies” are themselves the gifts of Christ to His Church—men who are diligent in selecting “words of delight”—words which shall be as goads because they rouse and impel the hearer to right actions, and as tent-pegs because they remain fixed in the memory. The fact stated is all-important, viz., the establishment of the people in Christian life and doctrine largely depends on the teaching of God’s appointed ministers.

I have stated one reason for the decline of pulpit power. Are there not others? Let us look to ourselves. I would beseech my younger brethren to realize their position as “dispensers of the Word of God.” Shakespeare in his “Henry IV.” puts the office grandly when he speaks of the minister of Christ as an interpreter of truth, the distributor of the bread of life, the “opener and intelligencer of the sanctities of heaven.”

How deep you were within the books of God
 To us, the speaker in His parliament
 To us, the imagined voice of God Himself,
 The very opener and intelligencer
 Between His grace, the sanctities of heaven,
 And our dull workings.

In the absence of ethical and religious teaching, we have no reason or right to look for the higher forms of moral and religious character. I would guard myself against three dangers in my pulpit ministrations:

1st. The danger of forgetting the only remedy for sin. All reading must be subject to this. When the mind is full of the theme, and your motto is “*Nihil humani a me alienum puto*,” and you have notes on your desk from theology, history, poetry, fiction, biography, science, and you feel and know that you can interest your people, beware! Is there a remedy for sin amongst it all? The great preacher, Richard Cecil, had serious symptoms of a dangerous disease. His wife persuaded him to consult a celebrated specialist. Both patient and doctor were men of the highest culture. They discussed music and art. They shook hands with an expression of mutual delight. Richard Cecil went home and said, “I never met with a more delightful and interesting man in my life. Thank you, dear, for mentioning his name.” The anxious wife said, “But what about the remedy? Does he give you any hope?” Doctor and patient had forgotten the object of the visit. In these days of a growing semi-socinianism let us never forget that “it is the blood which maketh atonement for the soul.” Culture may refine, but it cannot

renew. Æstheticism may be the ally of religion, but it cannot be its substitute. So long as there are four factors in the history of man—conscience, sin, sorrow, death—so long will the Gospel be needed, which can alone pacify conscience, remove sin, give peace in the hour of sorrow, and take away the sting from death.

2ndly. Let us guard against the danger of vanity. "Why is it, father," said one of the friends of St. Francis d'Assisi, "that all the world goes after you?" "Why," he replied, "even for this. The Lord saw no greater sinner in the world than I—none less wise, none vile, and so He chose me above all to accomplish a wonderful work on the earth." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints," said St. Paul, "is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

3rdly. Let us not forget our entire dependence upon God the Holy Ghost, that we may not be left to our own barrenness and blindness, but that our faculties for teaching may be directed and perfected. "We have received," says St. Paul, "the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God, which things also we teach, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The most eminent preachers of the Gospel are those who have been most conspicuous for simple dependence on Divine aid. On the other hand, there have been in every age of the Church men of the highest natural gifts who have grieved the Holy Ghost by a spirit of pride and self-conceit. Disappointed of success in God's appointed way—the power of the Spirit—they have resorted to the witchcraft of philosophy, and sought help from the heresies of the dead. Their power has gone, and the Philistines have found them, like Saul, amongst the slain. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!"¹ If we do not receive the Spirit which Jesus promised we cannot rightly perform the commission which Jesus gave.

My brethren, let us give time to our sermons. Let us not offer to God that which has cost us nothing. Think of the old Italian painters—men like Fra Angelico—who prayed and worked, and worked and prayed, and gave the very best of their genius to some sacred subject that it might bring some glory to God and lead some brother in the monastery to holier and happier thoughts. It might be for some chapel, it might only be seen by a small brotherhood of men; but God saw and God knew, and the Christ had given Himself for the salvation of men.

Never be discouraged by a want of visible success. Quaint Thomas Fuller says: "Herein hath God humbled many painstaking pastors, in making them clouds to rain, not over Arabia the Happy, but Arabia the Desert and Stony."

Failure is but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days.

"The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth." Never despond. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Forgive me if I refer to one more stake for the stability of the Church. I refer to a point which specially bears on the relationship of the clergy to each other. I speak of the cultivation of a spirit of unity. Let us determine, by God's help, to banish that spirit of party which not only endangers our personal sanctification, but is, I believe, one of the greatest barriers and hindrances to many thoughtful minds in England to-day against the reception of the doctrine of Christ. "Now we see

¹ Spurgeon's Lectures to Students, second series, p. 20.

through a glass, darkly. Now I know in part." We must never yield an iota of our own deep conviction of truth as it has come to us; but the love of Christ is wider than party, and Divine truth coloured by the human media, by which it is refracted to us, in the combination and union of its media, approaches nearest to the pure, achromatic light of heaven. I am convinced that party spirit impedes the growth of holiness, for it intervenes between our souls and the warming beams of heaven. The corn under the hedge which separates never ripens so fast as the corn in the middle of the field. The shadows lessen as we approach the substance. Differences are minimized in proportion as we get nearer to the foundation of all truth. There shall we find the true eirenicon. "Thy watchmen shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Jerusalem." What we need in the Church of England to-day is more unity of feeling, more unity of counsel, more unity of action, more unity of purpose. Let each one of us in this year, in our place of service, "endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

In conclusion, hear the voice of the prophet: "Spare not." The time is short; the harvest is great; the reward is sure.

"Lengthen thy cords"—by redeeming the time, by making use of every opportunity, by going out day by day beyond thy former self. But do not forget to "strengthen thy stakes"—in thine own inner life and in the souls of the people committed to thy trust.

As we think of the great and serious responsibility of our office, we cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" As we grasp the truth of the Apostle's answer we may face the future calmly, courageously, hopefully, for "Our sufficiency is of God." The vision of the future shall be a reality to each faithful servant: "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken."

JAMES WAREING BARDSLEY.

HUDDERSFIELD.

ART. III.—IMPRESSIONS OF BUDDHISM IN EASTERN ASIA.

A VISIT of a few days to Ceylon, of three weeks to Mid China, and of nine weeks to Central and Southern Japan, paid in all cases under the guidance and in the company of old and experienced missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, afforded me, in the year that has just closed, a very special and favourable opportunity, not only of observing the position and progress of missionary work, but also of understanding something of the present attitude and character of the native religions with which our missions are face to face. In all three countries the predominant religion is Buddhism. I was, of course, aware that everywhere the Buddhism of this day is very different from the Buddhism of the books or of its founder. But I was not prepared to find its development so distinct in the three great national centres of that ancient faith.