Articles by A. J. Pollock

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Extremes (Jan 1962)

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The quaintness of the presentation of a truth often arrests one, where otherwise it might pass as commonplace and be easily forgotten. Such a presentation of truth is seen in Ezekiel 44:20, “Neither shall they (the priests) shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.”

A passage like this pulls one up. It says as plainly as can be said, Do Not Go to Extremes. Here are two priests. One is altogether shaven; the other has long flowing locks. Here are extremes; they are one-sided, and both are wrong.

Here are two Brothers. One is all soul, heart, fire, zeal, earnestness. He is impatient of the restraint that association with his brethren imposes. Divine principles as to fellowship and service are nothing to him. He is all for the salvation of the sinner, and cares for nothing beyond this. We may admire his zeal, but we deplore his one-sidedness; in this he is wrong.

The other is well instructed in the Word, he is all for the Church, and knows how everything should be done. He does not understand the zeal of his brother; love for souls does not seem to move his heart; he is a wet blanket to those who are seeking to spread the Gospel. We may be thankful for his intelligence, but we wish he had more warmth of heart; he is one-sided, and that is wrong.

The former is in danger of superficiality, indifference to principles and worldliness. The latter will be dogmatic,

cold, dry, formal and possibly legal or worldly, for it is extraordinary how departure from the divine balance of things tends to the same practical result. They may be as far apart as the poles as to their attitude to things, and yet strangely united in practice. They may envy, despise, and anathematize each other by day and be bedfellows at night.

We do not want less zeal in the Gospel, or less intelligence in or love of the truth, or regard for divine principles. We want more of such things all around. But how shall the one rightly balance the other, so that we be saved from extremes?

We answer in one word, Christ. It is by being kept in living touch with Him. In touch with Christ, each will value the other's service, will esteem the other better than himself, will seek to profit by what the other has learnt of Christ, and so zeal will be tempered by intelligence, and intelligence be of practical value because warmed by zeal.

In touch with Christ the evangelist will learn in a practical way that he is a gift from the ascended Lord to His Church; he will learn that his converts are saved for the Church, the Church that is the Body of Christ.