

VINET.

Vinet, the first named, was born towards the close of the last century in Lausanne, one of the most beautiful cities in Switzerland, or, indeed, in the world; having at its feet the blue waters of the lake of Geneva, and in the distance, but in full view, the majestic and snow-clad peaks of Mont Blanc. He received his education in his native city, which then as now was the seat of an ancient school of learning. He was destined to the ministry by his father, but having early displayed literary and philosophical abilities of a high order, he was, at the age of twenty-two, appointed professor of the French language and literature in the University of Basle, receiving ordination as a minister of the Gospel about the same period. In that famous border city, even at that early date the scene of zealous missionary enterprise, Vinet continued to teach from 1819 to 1838. There probably he formed those decidedly spiritual views of religion, which are found in all his discourses. In 1838 he was recalled to his native city as professor of theology; a position which, first in connection with the ecclesiastical establishment, and afterwards with the newly formed Free Church of the Canton de Vaud, he occupied until his death. He was in his day a prolific author, giving to the press as many as twelve or fourteen volumes on various subjects of a literary, philosophical or religious character. It is his sermons only with which we have to do here. These were given to the public at various times, and comprise in all several volumes. A large number of the most striking of them have been made accessible to the English reader in two volumes, entitled respectively, *Vital Christianity* and *Gospel Studies*.

The sermon must take its character to a large extent from the audience to which it is addressed. Its form, its contents even, must be governed in some degree by the needs, the tastes, certainly by the intellectual and moral appreciations of those whom it is designed to help. Vinet addressed himself largely to men of culture, many of whom were either uneasy in their hold on the Christian faith or had actually relinquished it under the influence of the materialistic and skeptical thought of the age. It was his aim to recover for them their impaired or their lost religious convictions. This aim he seeks to accomplish by calling attention with rare and penetrating insight to the spiritual in man, and to the adaptation of the gospel to all its deeper needs and its loftier aspirations. The worthlessness of all material splendors; the insignificance of all merely intellectual achievements, the transcendent glory