

# Some Sunday Discourses.

## Shakespeare As A Teacher Of Morals and Religion.

**Rev. Dr. Black at St. Andrew's,  
Discusses the Uplifting Char-  
acter of The Great  
Poet's Work.**

Rev. Dr. Black, in his evening discourse last Sunday, claimed for Shakespeare that that poet was a profound Christian moralist, his teaching accepting and enforcing the rule of life as we find it in the Holy Scriptures.

Dealing with one objection commonly made to Shakespeare's work, the presence in it of the coarse and indecent, Dr. Black pointed out that he was holding the mirror up to nature, and that while the plain speaking in Shakespeare is coarse at times, as in other writers of the time, it is never insidious, the very fearless bluntness making it to a large extent harmless to the reader of to-day. He said that he could name a dozen popular and much-read novels of the last twenty-five years, any one of which would do more injury to the moral fibre of the average reader than all of Shakespeare's works—not notoriously salacious novels, but such as decent people are not ashamed to have on their parlor tables.

"Next to the knowledge of God, the knowledge of human character is the most important. Without such knowledge virtue is impossible. . . . Shakespeare's characters are types because they are true to nature. . . . They all pass before us, each one in their turn pointing a moral and adorning a tale. It may be said of many a one that they have read Shakespeare and have got no life lessons, no moral teaching, no spiritual insight, no knowledge of our fellow-men. 'True 'tis pity and pity is 'tis true,' but to how many is the book of nature a sealed book! How many there are who can read the Word of God without receiving a spiritual uplift! . . . It is not everyone who can

"Find tongues in trees, books in running brooks,  
Sermons in stones and good in everything."

"The extent to which the sum total of our intellectual and moral attitude is affected by Shakespeare is demonstrated by the unconscious use which we make of the poet's language. We have ten times as many brief epigrammatic familiar quotations from him in everyday life than we have from any other book—the Bible always excepted."

Dr. Black illustrated Shakespeare's philosophy of life by reciting several quotations, among them Polonius' advice to Laertes on the latter's departure for France. In the same way he took up his teaching about sin, the conscience and repentance, the accusing conscience and the penitent.

His examination of Shakespeare's teaching about temperance was of special interest, in recollection of the fact that while the poet lived in an age when total abstinence was practically unknown either in theory or practice, he inveighs against intemperance through the instrumentality of some of his strongest characters.

"Passion in Shakespeare may, true to the habit of the age and the persons depicted, sometimes manifests itself in

libertinism, but it is true to morality . . . He never tries to make that appear amiable which religion and reason unite in teaching us to despise. He never clothes impurity with garments of virtue. And this is the charge that can be brought against too much of our modern fiction and too many of our modern stage plays. Contrast the morality of Shakespeare with the writers of his own age, or with those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or even with many of our own contemporaries, and the comparison is in favor of Shakespeare."

"There are wonderful passages in Shakespeare wherein the cardinal virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity are exalted,

and others in which reverence toward God and mercy toward our fellow-men is inculcated. . . . Separate discourses might be given to such themes as Shakespeare's treatment of prayer, of mercy, of sacrifice, of death and judgment."

"I speak in all soberness and in absolute sincerity," said Dr. Black, near the close of this significant discourse, "when I advise you to know first of all your English Bible well, and then your Shakespeare. . . ."

"When a man preaches to all the world, it matters neither to the world nor the preacher where you erect his pulpit."

"The Almighty has showed man what is good. These three things he requires—to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly. The study of Shakespeare help us not only to fulfil, but also to love this trinity of duty."

## The Yellow Peril.

**Rev. Clarence Mackinnon's Lec-  
ture to Students Last Sunday  
on the True Method of  
Averting It.**

Rev. Clarence MacKinnon, of Park Street Church, lectured before the students of Dalhousie College last Sunday afternoon on the Yellow Peril and the best means of averting it. The ideas brought out by him on that occasion are contained in what follows:

The terrible menace to Western civilization that has been steadily increasing in recent years from the four hundred millions of the yellow race in China, whose population is overflowing in unwelcome emigration into other lands, whose stubborn conservatism puts an impassable barrier to the progress so essential to the harmony of the world, and whose cheap labor threatens the industrial market and the security of the great working classes, has only too well deserved to be called "The Yellow Peril." In Canada the peril has been temporarily averted by anti-immigration laws that practically require high Chinese officials to go through in bond, and have subjected Chinese ladies in connection with our missions to humiliation very repugnant to our broad humanitarian views; but the only alternative was an unrestricted deluge of the yellow race on our coasts. In China itself the peril to the foreigner is at present acute. Should the Powers fail in a solution of the immediate problem, should they prove themselves unable to secure adequate protection for their representatives in future and for Western commerce, there is grave danger that matters will drift into a state of chronic warfare between the races; and then, if instead of an effeminate and effete soldiery, the 400,000,000 of China should arm and strike back with what has been paradoxically called a "civilized fist," the menace to the peace of the twentieth century would be little less than awful. For even if the white man were successful in all engagements, could he ever overrun and outdo these impenetrable millions?

But the other alternative offers no less welcome a dilemma. If the Powers are successful in their demands, if the best security for Western commerce is obtained, if all ports that could be desired

are thrown open to our trade, the peril is only removed from the battle-field to the fields of industry. The sword beaten into the ploughshare and the spear into the pruning hook will not prove the less formidable weapons. For if the inexhaustible soil of fertile China were fully operated, and its virgin mines opened up with the present cheap rate of Chinese labor, Chinese products would undersell every market, and the British workman be compelled to live as the Chinaman or go a-begging.

The only way to finally avert this grave peril is to break down the barriers between the two great races and fuse them into one. How is this to be done? That which makes and perpetuates racial distinctions is not the complexion or the features of a people, but its ideals. The real yellowness lies in the spirit rather than in the skin. The fusion of races will obviously take place when the same ideals will inspire both.

But so marked is the contrast between the two peoples that the practical task of accomplishing this seems well-nigh impossible. Besides, the reluctance of the white man to unbend and make the first approaches, and the stolid conservatism of the yellow man who jeers at everything foreign, as well as the unhappy antagonism of feeling that selfishness and misunderstanding have fomented, immensely increase the difficulty and make the threatening peril greater than ever.

One power only is equal to the great attack, and that is Christianity, whose ideals are not those of the white man alone, but of the whole human race, and whose message of tender love has proved itself efficacious to move the most stubborn heart, and whose demand for a full life for all men, and a just wage for work rendered, will not degrade the white man to the level of the yellow, but will elevate the yellow man to the enjoyment of the white man's culture and civilization.

As Christianity is not disseminated by generals or traders or government officials, but by the great mass of the common people, by the widow's mite and the widow's prayer, it becomes the taste of those who are to lead society and who would avert the Yellow Peril, to foster as much as possible the missionary spirit.