

and from his heart and mind flowed forth those impulses which animated and guided the Christian world. His name has been transmitted to after ages as the author of some of the most touching hymns, a few of which are now finding their way into modern compilations. His finest is "Christ on the Cross" St. Victor, Hildebert, Peter the Venerable, and Bernard of Clugny, were the most noted of hymn writers during those ages. By far the noblest of all the mediæval hymns were the renowned "Dies Irae" and the "Stabat Mater Dolorosa." Of the former it may be truly affirmed that no other of the Latin hymns has been so widely sung or touched so many hearts. Of its author little is known beyond the name. The best judges agree in ascribing it to Thomas of Celano, a Franciscan friar, who lived in a town in the Abruzzi, in the thirteenth century. The subject of the "Dies Irae" is the Last Judgment. A low, trembling, awe-stricken voice seems to break the silence, anticipating, in quivering accents, the dawning of that dread day—

"Hark, the tramp, with thrilling tone,  
From sepulchral regions lone,  
Summons all before the throne.

"Time and death it doth appal,  
To see the buried ages all  
Rise to answer at the call."

Then follow passionate pleadings for mercy—

"King of dreadful majesty!  
Who dost freely justify!  
Fount of pity, save Thou me!

"Recollect, O Love Divine!  
'Twas for this lost sheep of Thine  
Thou Thy glory didst resign;

"Sate'st wearied seeking me:  
Suffered'st upon the tree:  
Let not vain Thy labours be!"

Thus the hymn closes—

"Full of tears and full of dread,  
Is the day that wakes the dead,  
Calling all, with solemn blast,  
From the ashes of the past.  
Lord of mercy! Jesu blest!  
Grant the faithful light and rest."

It is said that Samuel Johnson could never, on account of his tears, repeat this composition in the original.

I close with an English translation of

the celebrated "Stabat Mater Dolorosa," taken from the *Lyra Catholica* :—

"At the cross her station keeping,  
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,  
Close to Jesus to the last;  
Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,  
All His bitter anguish bearing,  
Now, at length, the sword has passed.

"Oh! how sad and sore distressed  
Was that Mother highly blest  
Of the sole-begotten One!  
Christ above in torment hangs;  
She beneath beholds the pangs  
Of her dying, glorious Son.

"Is there one who would not weep,  
Whom'd in miseries so deep  
Christ's dear Mother to behold?  
Can the human heart refrain  
From partaking in her pain,  
In that Mother's pain untold?

"Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,  
She beheld her tender child  
All with bloody scourges rent;  
For the sins of His own nation,  
Saw Him hang in desolation,  
Till His Spirit forth He sent.

"O thou Mother! fount of love!  
Touch my Spirit from above,—  
Make my heart with thine accord;  
Make me feel as thou hast felt,—  
Make my soul to glow and melt  
With the love of Christ my Lord."

Every one must feel the exquisite pathos and tenderness of this hymn; while, at the same time, it must be admitted that a subtle error runs through the whole—the aim throughout being to make the mind contemplate the suffering Saviour through the pierced heart of the mournful Mother. The last verse is a direct prayer to Mary for grace. The author was Jacobus de Beneditis, a Franciscan monk who died about 1306.

### SYNOD SERMON.

"EXISTING CHURCH THOUGHT AND ACTIVITY IN RELATION TO REVEALED CHARACTER AND OBJECTS."—Such is the general subject of a Discourse delivered by Rev. Dr. McCulloch, the retiring moderator, before the Synod at its last meeting in Halifax. No recommendation from us is required, as the sermon has already been approved by a unanimous vote of Synod to