

PORTRAIT GALLERY OF CHURCHMEN.

No. 2.

A TRUE PASTOR AND PRIEST.

SOME twelve years ago we received a friendly summons to attend a private meeting to be held in the vestry of St.— at W—. The invitation came from the Rev. George Body, and he whom we were asked to meet was the Rev. C. F. Lowder, both so abundant in labors, so fervent in zeal, so passionately self-sacrificing in pastoral devotion, as to recall the glories of the Apostolic age. The Church of England has no brighter jewels in her crown, nor will any glow with richer effulgence in the firmament radiant with the shining as stars for ever and ever of those who won many to righteousness.

The cramped little vestry was full with a very tiny gathering. The business was prefaced by a short service, said by Mr. Lowder in a tone and style somewhat, to us, needlessly, eccentrically unlike what Englishmen are accustomed to hear associated with the Prayer Book. But the intense, pathetic earnestness of the man destroyed criticism or carping, and when he rose to plead the cause of the society he represented, he gave a marvellous example of that supreme eloquence which is apart from any material form of words or gesture, the eloquence of spirit and of heart on fire with a divine flame touching into life other spirits and other hearts. We conversed briefly with him after supper at a friend's, where, although most free from clerical affectation and full of "the sweet courtesies" of a well-bred gentleman, he seemed "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and though far above misanthropy, and untouched with the puritanic pride and self-conceit which inspires some persons' unworldliness, he manifestly felt less happy in the society of men than of God in performing his ministerial functions at the altar or the bedside of the suffering sick. He walked the upper slope of life that trends on to Paradise, from whence shoots forth a heavenly light down that earthly path which knows no longer the footfall of the sainted Mission Priest of St. George's and St. Peter's whose life was literally a sacrifice for the semi-heathens who swarm about the docks of London. Mr. Lowder was no wastrel thrust into the Church for a living; he took honors in classics and mathematics at Oxford. He entered clerical life in a London parish where poverty rubs shoulders with aristocracy and wealth. Like all true men, he paid court to the lowly; he left the kid glove service which his assailants of the *Rock* and *Record* so delight in, to be performed by those super-refined agitators, and, cross in hand and cross in heart, and cross in brain, he threw himself, with heroic energy, to lift the Cross of Christ amid a people that walked in darkness in the very core of a Christian land. We were tempted, some years ago, to take a short cut across his parish, before his arrival, but the experiment was not repeated, as, in broad daylight, we were hustled, pelted and insulted a dozen times, while everybody in sight laughed at the spectacle of a "swell" in such a region. Mr. Lowder went down into this semi-savage district as truly a missionary to the heathen as St. Paul was in crossing the *Ægean*. He took the bold, and, to some, almost wicked course of appealing vividly to the eyes of the people as a soldier of the Cross, by carrying, or having carried, before him a large cross and banner openly in those terrible slums. This naturally drew a crowd of observers, to whom he preached Christ crucified; the symbol of the Cross to attract

the eye, the story of the Cross to attract the heart.

Soon arose the spirit of resistance. Satan is no laggard. His camp was threatened, and up sprang a host of furious demoniacs, who, for the space of a year, kept the parish in a state of fearful turmoil; riots after riots occurred, in which—to their everlasting disgrace—some who called themselves Christians took part, and Mr. Lowder's life was again and again in peril from violence. But why do the heathen rage? The people imagined a vain thing indeed, who thought thus to crush an English mission priest who fought persecution by acts of mercy and resisted violence by acts of love. Pestilence fell on the parish, cholera stalked abroad, and wherever cholera came, the pastor of the stricken sheep followed. Men who had howled coarse curses at Mr. Lowder lay at the point of death, no hand to help, no eye to watch, no tongue to inspire hope or to give consolation but his, the missionary's, whom they had so foully used. Then came a glorious hour of triumph. The spectacle of a man offering his very life a sacrifice for his enemies, brought out from the hearts of those rough people an outburst of gratitude, and henceforward, to his death and to their death, the once reviled was, and will be, their beloved, their revered pastor and friend. Christian records have no brighter chapter than the story of the triumph of Christian self-sacrifice over brutal opposition.

On the roll of communicants at St. Peter's, London Docks, are the names of over 500 men and women who were brought out of a life of sin, many from a life of gross wickedness and criminality, by the evangelistic labors of Mr. Lowder. Hundreds, too, have gone away to other places, and many to that home above, where they have had the joy of heaven enhanced by re-union with him of whom they will be forever a joy and rejoicing. St. Peter's is a parish full of the activities of Church benevolences and efforts, every form of evil incident to poverty and a rough life is met, and the rich of their substance and their education and their leisure, minister freely and lovingly to their poorer brethren.

Mr. Lowder's ritual was extreme, the Persecution Company's agents, "men having graduated in the school of criticism who would be unable to obtain a degree in any other," prowled about him and St. Peter's, ever threatening, but ever deterred from offensive action by their sense of cowardly shame and by the noble spirit of the Church authorities, who regarded so justly Mr. Lowder's ritual as a mere spot on the sun of his life-work. We object to his ritual, because it was "his," not that of the Church. But none but those too blunt to be capable of a sensible judgment in such matters would refuse to admit that, in ministering to such a flock, it was very wise to make the services all jubilant with song, and bright with all the beauty possible in divine worship. This is a selfish world, and no meaner form of selfishness disgraces men than the determination of those who cannot enjoy music or art in other forms, to deny to others the joy, the inspiration, the teaching they derive from these good gifts of the Author and Creator of all beauty.

Mr. Lowder's people lived amid loveless, and coarse, and beautyless surroundings, dull homes, wretched furniture, and pictureless walls, no flowers, nothing ever caught their senses but ugliness and deformity in sight and sound. To such a people, a church glorified by ritual and music and decorations is a place wherein they forget their sad daily surroundings, where the gloom of life lifts from their souls like a shadow, where their hard thoughts soften, their coarse thoughts flee, where prayer is possible, where praise is inspired,

and where, in a very real sense indeed, the temple on earth "is like a little Heaven below." "By their fruits ye shall know them;" is that true or false? Since the days of St. Paul, no missionary has done a nobler work than the late Missionary of St. Peter's, London Docks. His converts, as the phrase is, to Christ, are fruits which tell, trumpet-tongued, that while *Record* and *Lock* anathematized him, he was walking with Jesus and performing miracles of grace by Almighty Help. The Church of God has lost one of its chief apostles, evangelists and saints by the death of the Rev. C. F. Lowder.

BOOK NOTICE.

BIGOTRY DEMOLISHED.—By G. C. Moore: Hunter, Rose & Co. The reaction against sectism, on the principle that it is right to split Christendom up into fragments, has distinctly set in. There is a wave of protest against the notice, in which the originators and fomentors of new sects have so long nursed themselves in a fool's paradise. "It is most gratifying," says a writer named Laidlaw, "to observe that we have come upon an era in the world's history, in which sectarian jealousies are beginning to disappear."

The writer of the handsome little book, whose title has been given above, is one of those who have felt the impulse of this "war," and sturdily puts his lance in rest to attack the opposing "bigotry."

Mr. Moore is a "Baptist," and the object of his present attack is the notion of "Close Communion" among some of his brethren. Some of our readers may not know that there is a denomination of the so-called "Baptists," who lay so much stress upon the necessity of being immersed after one has grown up from childhood, as to exclude from the privilege (2) of their communion tables all who have been (1) baptized in infancy, or (2) baptized by sprinkling. Against this idea, Mr. Moore runs full tilt, with all the eloquence and fire of his nature. There are many passages on the subject of Christian Unity that would bear quotation, and we may some day find space for them. In respect to the importance of unity—external union—of Christians, and in regard to the sin of man-made barriers to it, this little work is a valuable contribution to the Christian literature of the day.

We are sorry that we cannot say as much of the value of his arguments. He argues from the standpoint of the Baptist notion of *adult-immersion*, and identifies that with Baptism; throws overboard, practically, the whole question of Baptism, instead of the "Baptist" excrescences; as if one in emptying a pitcher of some offensive contents were to throw the pitcher away also; or as if the Church of England at the Reformation, in endeavoring to get rid of Romish abuses of Christian doctrines and rites, had given up the very doctrines and rites (themselves) of the Catholic Church. "The abuse of a thing doth not take away the right use of it," is a golden maxim of Reform of all kinds. In order to upset the ultra-Baptist notion that *their system* of Baptism is not the necessary entrance to Church fellowship and communion, Mr. Moore, unfortunately, takes the position that Baptism altogether is not so. He has an interesting theory, derived from the eminent Dr. Carson, that not all instances recorded of the way things were done in the Apostolic Church are examples or practical precepts for the way these things should be done for all time in the Christian Church; and that the use of Baptism, as the initiatory rite of Christianity, is one of these things. Baptism, however, does not depend on example. There is preceptive teaching; for it is the imitation. He takes great pains to show that it was natural and easy for Baptism to occupy this initiatory position in the Apostolic Church, and that, (because so many people are at sea on the subject now), it is not so natural and easy now, and therefore is not to be rigidly insisted upon! Truly, "the way of transgressors is hard." Once leave the Old Path, and what turns and twists there are before one gets near the goal again. If Mr. Moore had had the advantage of orthodox training on the subject of Baptism, his line of argument would simply have been that Baptism, being naturally and properly the initiatory rite

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