

Sermons and preachers hold the Book Shelf this month. Here is the order in which they stand: Dale, Parker, Spurgeon, Maclaren. What a noble quartette! There may be men of profounder thought and wider scholarship, but in the pulpit English Nonconformity can shew nothing finer. Each is in his own way an unrivalled master. The strength of one is not the strength of another. The standpoint of one is not that of another. But in each case the pulpit is his throne. Each stands out a Saul among his fellows, and, allowing for all differences in tone and accent and emphasis, the same message is proclaimed by each: and from none do men turn away unheeding.

But it is of Maclaren, of Manchester, and his latest volume, *The Holy of Holies*,* that we wish to speak. Dr. Alexander Maclaren is already well known to most readers of the Shelf. Volumes of his sermons may be found in almost any minister's library; and those who have read other volumes will most appreciate the thirty-four sermons now announced. These sermons are on the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John's Gospel. Dr. Maclaren treads with reverent feet this Holy of Holies of Revelation. His own spirit is touched and he rises to heights never before reached. The sublimity of thought and the felt nearness of the Sacred Presence make the face of the preacher to shine.

This volume exhibits the strength as well as the weakness characteristic of Dr. Maclaren's preaching. It is positive and practical. Dr. Maclaren believes in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. Doubt here is devil-born. Mere intellectual preaching is a wasting and a desolation. The true preacher does not speculate, or argue, or reason; he proclaims. Such being Dr. Maclaren's view of preaching, whilst not ignorant of the questions raised by Criticism, he almost completely ignores them in his sermons.

Then, too, he has many of the qualifications necessary. His exegesis is exact and fresh. He has a clear logical Scotch intellect, a glowing imagination and genuine Celtic fire. Had he not been a preacher, he might have been poet. Indeed he cannot help being a poet even in preaching. One calls him the Tennyson of the pulpit.

We said that "The Holy of Holies" rises to sublimer heights than almost any thing else that Dr. Maclaren has published. This sublimity is due, more to the thought than to the mental development of the author. Intellectually, his "Sermons preached in Manchester" are on a level with any of his later volumes. The merit of all these sermons, homiletically, is

*The Holy of Holies. Sermons on Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of the Gospel of John. By Alexander Maclaren, D.D. Toronto: Willard Tract Depository. 1890