

The Dominion Presbyterian

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The Personal Element.

The strength of a man's preaching depends more upon what he is than upon what he says. If he be an insincere man, while he may charm with his eloquent periods, he will fail to command the respect, even of the men who admire him. Should he attempt to lead them where self-sacrifice becomes a necessity, they will refuse to follow him.

We know a man who is not a good preacher, in the ordinary acceptation of that word, who is not scholarly, who reads the Scriptures in schoolboy fashion, yet who is a greater power in the city in which he lives, and in the pulpit or on the platform, than any other minister of any denomination. There is a life behind his words, and it lends all its strong pure strength to wing the message that he comes forth from his Master's presence to deliver. In the same city is another minister, a studious, scholarly man, most careful in his choice of language, in prayer, and in the reading of the Scriptures, most painstaking lest he offend other men, yet who is steadily losing his ground. For, beneath the careful outward exterior there is a sub-stratum of meanness, and its frequent out-cropping gives the lie to all he says.

This second man is perhaps the more richly-endowed of the two, except in the spiritual graces. Here is a secret of power. It is the secret of the splendid power of some humble laborer, who, knowing nothing of any language but his own, nor of any school but that one where necessity sternly presides, will yet speak to you of truths far beyond your ken. As he leans on the spade or the plough-handle, or looks out at you through the grime of the shop he reveals to you an inner life of wondrous purity, and a spiritual vision of truly marvellous sweep.

We urge our young men to make the most of their college days, to take ad-

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vantage of every opportunity for developing their mental faculties, and perfecting their knowledge of men. Is there not a more excellent line of study? Is the training of soul-perception not worthy of some effort? Ought not the men who aspire to be the leaders of others in spiritual truths to be "far ben" themselves ere they enter upon such work? Yet how little the spiritual is cultivated while the student is within college halls, and still less does the busy minister find opportunity to go apart with the Master, that he may hold converse with Him, and come back to his work again, with face aglow and spirit pure and strong for his Master's service.

The Peace Conference.

The eyes of all civilized nations are turned to-day towards that spot in Holland where the "Parliament of Men" is assembled to consider the Czar's proposal to reduce the armament of the nations. The situation is puzzling to the undiplomatic mind. The ruler who proposes disarmament is remorselessly crushing out the national life of the Finns on the western side of his great Empire, and is fastening his grip upon China on his eastern border. His emissaries are busy in the south fomenting insurrection among the subjects of the Sultan, in order that the Turkish kingdom may be rent by internal strife, and Russia may have an excuse to take over a coveted section—in the interests of peace! In the Transvaal and in Samoa another nation, prominent in the Parliament of Men, has her forces ready. In the Philippines and also in Samoa still another is bringing about peace through the brutal force of arms. And yet another of the great nations has sent to that Parliament, as its representative, a man who is an avowed opponent of the policy proposed by the Emperor of Russia.

The undiplomatic mind cannot penetrate behind the scenes. We hope the result may not be valueless. The horrors of war, even of the comparatively petty strife of the present, are sufficient to make Christian men long for that time when war shall be no more. We believe there is but one agency that is sufficiently powerful to bring about this desirable condition; and Christian men and women, the world over, will unite in the prayer, that the Divine Spirit may operate upon the mind of those gathered in that great assembly, and that He may guide them to such conclusions as shall bring appreciably nearer the reign of the Prince of Peace over the earth.

We have a Priest on high who is touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities. My soul, unable to support itself in its aerial flight among the spirits of the invisible, now reposes on Christ, who stands revealed to my conception in the figure, the countenance, the heart, the sympathies of a man.—Dr. Chalmers.

Andrew Melville.*

We welcome another volume of the Famous Scots series. We do not know any series of small, cheap books which brings more fully to view the rich and varied life of Scotland. It is a library that all who cherish a reverential love for the land of their fathers should have in their possession for their own stimulus, and for the instruction of their children. The money wasted on one or two pretentious, useless volumes would buy all these neat little books. The volume now before us is worthy the attention of all those who take an interest in the great battles fought for civil and religious liberty; but that it is of special interest to Presbyterians, the following extract will show:

"Melville, and all who from first to last joined in the Scottish resistance to Episcopacy, were persecuted that the controversy in which they were engaged was one, not academic merely, but vital; and that, as it was settled one way or the other, so would the people be left in a position in which they would be able to develop their religious life with freedom and effect, or in one which would incalculably cripple it. That is a contention which history has amply vindicated.

"The best justification of the struggle carried on during the period from Melville to the Revolution (1574-1688), to preserve the Presbyterian system in the Church, is to be found in the benefits which that system has conferred upon the country. It has penetrated the whole Christian people with a sense of their individual responsibility in connection with the principles and government of the Church; it has saved the Church from being dwarfed into a mere clerical corporation; it has laid for it a broad, strong basis by winning to it the attachment of its common members, and by exercising their intelligence, sympathy and interest in regard to all its institutions and enterprises. It may be truly said of the Scottish people that their highest patriotism has been elicited and exercised over the religious problems of the nation; that they have shown more sensitiveness concerning their religious rights, liberties and duties than concerning any other interest of their life; and that they had been more readily and deeply touched when the honor and efficiency of their Church was at stake than by any other cause whatever. How should an ecclesiastical system better vindicate its claim? Nothing so ennobles a people as the care of matters of high concern. Such a case as Presbyterianism has laid on the Scottish people."

*"Andrew Melville" by William Morison. Famous Scots Series. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh and London.