

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—CRITICISMS ON SOME OF THE ABLEST REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS OF THE DAY.

BY AN EMINENT PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS.

NO. IX.—REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D., MANCHESTER, ENG.

DR. MACLAREN is eminently a preachers' preacher. By this I do not mean—as in saying the same thing, for example, of Dr. Bushnell, I might—that his sermons constitute a mine of material and resource from which preachers may draw. Dr. Maclaren is not primarily, as Dr. Bushnell primarily was, a free, original, and fructifying thinker, who happens to occupy a pulpit. He is a true and proper preacher, and not a thinker half misplaced. But he is a preacher such as preachers in particular appreciate and enjoy. His singular skill in homiletic workmanship is a marvel and an inspiration to them. Seldom has a more cunning craftsman, one at every point less needing to be ashamed, wrought in the pulpit. This, preachers, of course, are especially qualified to feel, and this it is which makes Dr. Maclaren peculiarly a preachers' preacher. Preachers learn method from him, if they do not from him so much derive thought.

Still, Dr. Maclaren is in a very high degree a thoughtful preacher. Of thoughts—of thoughts rather than of thought, if one may make such a paradoxical distinction—any chance sermon of Dr. Maclaren's is likely to be full. The essential preacher deals in thoughts, while the essential thinker deals in thought. Dr. Bushnell was an essential thinker, but Dr. Maclaren is an essential preacher. He thinks for the pulpit, as Dr. Bushnell thought for the closet. Dr. Maclaren has done what Dr. Shedd recommends and President Robinson warns against—each authority speaking therein with excellent reason—he has “cultivated the homiletic habit.” You might half suspect that his mind must, through long exclusive application of faculty to the producing of sermons, have become in a sort automatic in its homiletic action; such is the inevitable, unerring precision with which it works, and such, within certain limits, is the flawless perfection of its results.

Those results are wonderfully even in value reckoned throughout