

with religion. All other things being equal, the broader a man's understanding of Christian truth, the greater his likelihood of illustrating the many-sided beauty and strength of Christian conduct. And yet, in founding His church, Christ did not put the emphasis upon what we work out in the head, but upon what we feel in the heart. His first question was not "What do you think?" but "What do you practice?" His test of discipleship was not lodged in creed, but in character. For Christianity is not a speculative concept, but an active enthusiasm; and the only way to learn all that it means, is by doing now what it means to you, and thus making ready for further illumination. With each succeeding age the stress of polemic shifts more and more from the arena of theology to the arena of life. Men have not ceased to be interested in matters of belief, but they evince a growing desire to watch the practical effects of belief. The church, therefore, must take an interest in everything which concerns mankind, and teach us not merely how to die, but—what is far more difficult—how to live. She must have a sanctified worldliness about her which reveals the grandeur of the present and thus beats sordid materialism on its own ground. The true regeneration of the world is at once more radical and more comprehensive than most of the Quixotic plans which are being so constantly presented before us. And, therefore, the church of the future, while welcoming those who, in a sincere and reverent spirit, approach the question of human needs from another point of view, has a mission peculiarly her own. She is not called upon to take sides with any class or faction or to nail any new gospel to her door. Her work is to inaugurate reform in the individual soul, and thus permeate society with the heaven of a Divine impulse. She must not only possess an intelligent understanding of practical affairs, and a fervent sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men, but she must furnish actual proofs that Christ is still the power of God, that He is the supreme guiding spirit both in the realm of thought and action, and that it is His laws and His alone which, earnestly apprehended and sincerely followed, will answer the questions and inspire the hopes and ensure the progress of this new century."

Faith and the Higher Criticism.

BY REV. JOHN WATSON, D.D.

At the English Presbyterian Synod, in presiding the Westminster College report, Rev. Dr. Watson made an eloquent reference to this important subject. We give his remarks in full as reported in the *London Presbyterian*. Our contemporary says that the speaker "was heard with intense interest."

It appeared to him, as a working minister, that the danger of the day was the increase of negative thought and negative teaching within the Christian Church, and the want of a convincing affirmation concerning the great Christian verities. The need of religion had taken hold of the human mind and obtained a dwelling-place in the human soul. Their ministers ought not to come before their people with the suggestion of a doubt, but with the declaration of a conviction. This was what their people wanted when seated in their pews. They could speculate anywhere. They had come to the church to be confirmed in the good news of salvation, and if the minister sent them away with a doubt whether Christ was ever raised from the dead, or whether He ever lived at all, then it were better that such a

church should be closed. It appeared to him that whenever Christianity had taken up the positive position with adequate scholarship and charity she had succeeded. Whenever she had not taken up that position she had failed. For instance, how much was expected during the early part of last century from the Broad Church School. Where was that school to-day? The voices were silent in that great controversy. Its representatives were known all over the battle-fields of England's theological thought. Its wrecks lay on every shore. He would mention the names of Maurice, Kingsley, Stanley, and one who approximated to that party, it seemed to him, the brightest preacher of the last century, possibly the most subtle preacher in the English language—Robertson, of Brighton. Where to-day was there any Broad Church party to speak through their reviews, to moderate both if they needed it, and to give them sweetness and light? The school was non-existent, or if existent, was not reckoned as a factor, because they did not impregnate their disciples with positive truth, and did not give them that note of certainty which the High Church on the one hand, and the Low Church on the other gave. The Roman Church came forward and said, "We are satisfied by the Spirit speaking through the Word," and were they or the other wrong? People could take their choice and enter the one home or the other, and he was haunted with the idea that, if speculation were to go further, the one that would be the gainer was the Church of Rome. If the soul's house were to be in a state of perpetual disrepair, and left with no windows and no doors and with a shattered roof, then men would be glad to shelter themselves in that one which had at least a roof as a shelter as the sun began to set. He hoped that he would not be charged by the house with obscurantism or insufferable bigotry. He was there to set no unreasonable bounds to work and criticism; but he did honestly confess he was becoming alarmed and dismayed. If the critical surgery be necessary, let it remove the disaffection, or exercise itself on that alone. But when he saw that surgery, proposing to make its experiments not on the body but on the heart, then he trembled, not for health, but he trembled for life.

It was impossible to describe the effect produced on some of them when they saw recently a certain encyclopædia issue its latest volume. It was exceedingly significant that the article which was an attack on Christ's Gospel from the hands of two men, one a church minister and one a German, should have appeared in that encyclopædia. Articles appeared in the newspapers immediately after saying that ministers could not believe, and did not believe, that which they ascribed to their Lord's teaching. He did not know the standpoint of the writer of those articles who triumphed in the defeat of the Bible and taunted those men for longer giving such teaching. If evidence were brought forward showing that the Divine Spirit had not spoken by that book, or that Christ had not risen from the dead, and that there was no living Christ and no salvation, he, speaking as an uninspired man, would be filled with unspeakable regret for the loss of that great hope. If any man said, "What did it matter?" that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob never lived, he answered, "It took away at least the beginning of that great history which culminated with the coming of Jesus Christ, and it took away figures which were there as figures of the pioneers of faith. They came to the state-

ment of an eminent scholar that, after looking into everything, there were still nine sayings which could be credited to Christ, and, after looking into all, he was thankful to say, he believed that Jesus lived! He had decided whether Christ lived or not from the most arbitrary rules of criticism. It was most pathetic from the intellectual point of view that a man should attempt to settle such a question inside his little study, with dirty, dusty windows, while, down the street of life outside was heard the tramp of the feet of the Church of God, trusting the Lord Jesus, and following him through time into eternity.

Sparks From Other Anvils.

United Presbyterian: We are not able to preach the gospel in all languages. Do we preach it faithfully in the one language, with which we are familiar? On the day of judgment, one "tongue" will be enough to be responsible for.

Lutheran Observer: Many a spiritual decline that ends at last in complete apostasy begins in what we call mere neglect. The descent from strength to weakness, from spiritual life to spiritual death, proceeds at even pace with the growing indifference to Christian duty, privilege and worship.

Michigan Presbyterian: It is a pity that labor and capital are so often at war. He will be the benefactor of his race who can bring together the capitalist and the laboring man, and substitute a state of peace and friendly co-operation for the condition of warfare which seems to have become chronic.

Herald and Presbyter: The pastoral relation is one that ends at last in mutual respect and affection between pastor and people, and there should be nothing on either side indicating the absence of these qualities or calculated to destroy them in the other. Let there be tender love and regardful attentions, in the name of Christ, that every interest may be subserved and the work of the church carried on to the very highest and best advantage.

Canadian Baptists: Why any healthy, well-nourished boy should resolve upon putting an end to his own life is a riddle that no one can solve. And yet we hear not infrequently of suicidal attempts, more or less successful, which are made by lads only in their teens. If the truth were fully known in such instances it would probably be seen that the chief blame rests upon the detailed and sensational reports of all manner of crimes which abound in the daily press, and in the cheap trashy literature of the day. It is the stern duty of all parents and guardians to provide young people with pure and wholesome books and papers, and none other.

Christian Observer: Some critics of the Bible are very sure of their positions,—just as sure as were the critics of one or two generations ago that reading and writing were almost unknown in the days of Moses. In the new *Encyclopædia Biblica* Professor George Adam Smith expresses a "hope that no only will go to Beer-sheba looking for the seven wells" which give name to the place. But recently Prof. George L. Robinson, of McCormick Theological Seminary, has found the seven wells, and prints in the *Biblical World* a description of six of them with photographs of them. The frequency of such discoveries as this is very refreshing,