

Family Department.

MR. TOWNEND'S SERMON.

By some unexplained cause, over which neither the preacher nor ourselves have had control, the generally understood desire, which found fitting expression in the following resolutions, that the sermon preached before the Church of England Institute at their Anniversary Service should be published in the Church Guardian, has only now been carried into effect.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND INSTITUTE, Halifax, February 24th, 1881.

Resolved, That the sincere thanks of the members of our Church of England Institute be tendered to the Rev. Alfred J. Townend, A. M., Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces, for the learned and practical sermon preached by him at our Anniversary Service, held at St. Paul's Church, on Thursday evening, 17th instant.

And be it also Resolved, That the President be requested to obtain his permission to have the same published in the columns of the CHURCH GUARDIAN.

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Dear, gentle, saintly old man, type, after and next to His Divine Master of all that is loving and lovely—who can read this Epistle and the two next, without thinking that Divine Master for St. John—Evangelist, Epistolar, Seer! Love taught of love; love derived direct from the Author of all love; love not simply learning from its teacher, but attracting that teacher towards itself; so that while the Disciple's love inclined him towards his Master's bosom, it was the Master's love which loved to have His beloved Disciple there, before passing on to the garden of sorrow, the night of rejection, the morn of death; love, too, essentially human, for it had its growth, its obstacles, its failings, its image was like that in the dream of the Assyrian Monarch—not gold throughout, but with feet of iron mingled with clay.

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This is the French; stand aside, all preachers of the present hour, and let this Epistle be written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. No preaching, here, to the ages which are generally supposed to be best fitted to listen—the child before it leaves the nursery, Sunday School, and childlike, unreasoning faith—the man who has worn out life's pleasures, satiated himself with life's attractions, and is drawing near the inevitable end of life, as known below—no religion this of the cradle, the sick-bed, the three score years and ten; but rather a sermon to the young, vigorous, healthy—a religion for life in its morning and noonday—a sermon and religion, therefore, for most of those whom I am supposed to be addressing this evening. Pray God I may interpret it as this loving forefather of the Church intended, and as He, Whom St. John served, commissioned him to teach.

men, and young men grow old before their time, or at least when distinctions of age are so obliterated that it is hard to say which is boyhood and which is youth, which youth and which maturity; at least if the text be self-sufficient and readiness to ape the manners and affect the experience of older years, on the part of those who should be boys and youths respectively. It is an age of progress, too, and habits, like dress, are soon considered old-fashioned and put aside. The new fashion of children treading on the heels of young men, and young men blasé and done with life before they have well entered it, has taken the place of that old fashion which kept a boy a boy, a youth a youth, until the man could claim to be a man. But I pray God that one characteristic of old-fashioned childhood, old-fashioned youth, may remain as it existed in the days when St. John wrote this Epistle,—this part of his Epistle to young men,—and that the "Word of God may abide in them"—it you that you may read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, and so embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which God has given you in your Saviour Jesus Christ.

But he who wrote this Epistle was the champion of the Word of God in a far higher sense than this. His Gospel was written, among other reasons, for the special purpose of vindicating the same character and work of the Logos, or Word of God, which was Jesus, against the heresies of Gnostics and others, who taught somewhat similarly to the Unitarians of the present day. Thus, as you know, his Gospel begins: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," against the errors of those who already had begun to teach—"that the Son of God before His incarnation was not known to the world, that He did not exist with the Father in the essence of the Divinity, that He was but an inferior Eon, or spirit," and so throughout the first 14 verses of his 1st chapter, St. John goes on to refute heresies like to these, not so much arguing as positively asserting the Divinity, Mediatorial Work, and Life and Light-giving Power of Him who was God's Word—the Logos or expression and manifestation, the very mouth and utterance of the Great I Am, Jehovah, God.

end of the world close at hand, though why Christ should be a trouble to Christians, or that any soul which prays each day "Thy Kingdom come," is a little hard to understand. "Some men are always meeting troubles more than half way. There are cracks and crevices many a wall of many a building, social, political, and ecclesiastical, but it is no use to be fretting our fingers into them, pointing them out, and widening them. Fill them when you can, and as far as you can, and work away at the mortar of wall in front of you, and have the Great Architect to take care of the rest of the building. If it be His Church it won't fall. If man hands may knock away what human hands have made about it. The buttress of the State, the vessels of silver and vessels of gold, of State and of Church, may be taken away, but the building shall not fall, nor shall the glory of the Lord, the presence on the mercy seat, fall His faithful worshippers.